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Tikriti admits Kuwait invasion a mistake

STOCKHOLM (AP) — A top Iraqi official has told a Swedish newspaper that the 1990 invasion of Kuwait was a serious mistake. The remarkable statement by Barzan Ibrahim Al Tikriti, President Saddam Hussein's half brother and head of Iraq's U.N. mission in Geneva, came in an exclusive interview published Sunday by Svenska Dagbladet. It was the first time a high-level official has admitted publicly that the invasion was a mistake. "It's regrettable that Iraq invaded Kuwait," Mr. Tikriti said. "I wish it would not have happened since the consequences have been terrible for the Iraqi people." Mr. Tikriti is the youngest of President Saddam's three half-brothers from his mother's second marriage. Mr. Tikriti's father is a brother of President Saddam's father. In the interview, Mr. Tikriti expressed frustration over the United States' unwillingness to talk to Iraq. "They refuse to see us, but the United States is willing to meet with dictators like North Korea," he said. Now that Iraq has recognized Kuwait, he said, "we do everything we can to put things right again. The United States and Iraq cannot continue to be enemies, we need each other."

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Leading Pakistani editor killed

KARACHI (AP) — The prominent editor of a popular weekly political magazine was killed by gunmen who ambushed him as he left his office Sunday night, police said. Mohammad Salahuddin, editor of Takbeer, a right-wing, Urdu-language publication, was coming out of a parking garage in his car when the attackers opened fire with pistols, according to police and Salahuddin's driver. He was hit at least six times. The motive for the attack appeared to be political, but police said they did not know who was responsible.

Man with \$500,000 held in Madrid

MADRID (AP) — An Iranian-born Spanish citizen was arrested Sunday at Madrid airport after currency worth just under \$500,000 was found stuffed in his suitcase, authorities said. Sobah Keyani Zamani, 31, was arrested for failing to declare the currency. He was trying to board a Lufthansa flight for Istanbul, Turkey via Frankfurt on Sunday morning, police said. Mr. Zamani, a resident of Madrid, told police he believed he was carrying medicine for victims of the Kurdish rebellion in southeastern Turkey. Police said his suitcase was stuffed with the equivalent of \$498,026 in Spanish, French and German currency.

Egypt wants to reduce Sinai force

TEL AVIV (AP) — The foreign ministry confirmed Sunday that Egypt wants to reduce the peacekeeping force in the Sinai desert, with one source saying Cairo sought to eliminate the multinational observers entirely. Egypt, trying to cut its third of the annual \$50-million cost of the multinational force of observers (MFO), is again pushing for a reduction in the 2,400 troops. "In the last couple of years, the Egyptians have been regularly raising the issue of cutting down the expenses of the MFO," foreign ministry spokesman Yigal Palmor told the Associated Press. "Their suggestion is cutting down expenses by cutting down the force," he said.

Israel-Syria peace by spring — Baz

CAIRO (AFP) — An Israeli-Syrian peace accord is possible by next spring if U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher narrows the gap between the two sides during his forthcoming shuttle, an Egyptian official said Sunday. "Mr. Christopher should partly narrow the gap" but he will "not be able to reach a complete formula for a settlement," said presidential political advisor Usama Al Baz. The conclusion of a peace accord was possible by "next spring," he told reporters after holding talks with British Junior Foreign Minister Douglas Hogg in Cairo. Mr. Christopher is to visit Syria and Israel between Tuesday and Thursday.

'Militants buying arms in Switzerland'

ZURICH (R) — The Swiss federal prosecutor's office has been monitoring the activities of Islamic fundamentalists said to be using Switzerland as a base to buy and ship arms to Algeria, a Swiss newspaper reported on Sunday. The newspaper Sonntags Zeitung reported that it had obtained documents in which the prosecutor's office said it had observed Algerian citizens or people of Algerian origin for several months involved in illegal trafficking in support of the Islamic opposition in Algeria. Peter Lehman, spokesman for the prosecutor's office, had no comment on the newspaper report. According to the report, the prosecutor's office also said in the documents that since last March special efforts had been made to purchase weapons, explosives, munitions and "technical equipment."

Damascus seeks to defuse Beirut crisis

Hariri, Berri hold talks with Khaddam

DAMASCUS (Agencies) — Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Al Hariri and Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri opened talks with Syrian Vice-President Abdul Halim Khaddam on Sunday on how to defuse a political crisis arising from Mr. Hariri's resignation.



Rafik Hariri

Diplomats said Mr. Khaddam met Mr. Berri first and then they were joined by Mr. Hariri. No details were available of the meeting which was not reported by Syria's state-run media.

The diplomats said Syria was unhappy about Lebanese leaders keeping Damascus busy solving their problems.

The diplomats said it was unlikely that President Hafez Al Assad would meet the Lebanese leaders on Sunday. Mr. Hariri says he is resigning because his ambitious plans to rebuild Lebanon following its 1975-90 civil war were being obstructed.

Mr. Berri, a civil war chief-tain, is said to be the prime minister's main opponent, with supporters in the cabinet who openly criticise Mr. Hariri.

Both Mr. Hariri and Mr. Berri have close links with Syria, the main foreign power broker in Lebanon where it has some 35,000 troops. Mr. Hariri told President Elias Hrawi on Thursday of his "definite wish" to step down after two years in power, a move which has pushed Lebanon to the brink of economic and political turmoil.

But he would not formally present his letter of resignation to the president until after his talks in Syria, advisors said.

Syria pulls the political strings in Beirut and deploys 35,000 troops in Lebanon.

Analysts in Lebanon be-

lieve the final verdict on Mr. Hariri's resignation will be made by Damascus, and will depend on whether it still needs him as prime minister.

Mr. Hrawi for his part has said he will do everything he could to dissuade billionaire Saudi-backed Hariri from stepping down.

But Mr. Hariri, stung by fierce opposition attacks, said in a television interview Saturday there was "no room for manoeuvre."

"I will not go back on my decision which is in the interests of Lebanon," he declared.

A close advisor said there was scarcely a one per cent chance he would change his mind.

The announcement Thursday sent shock waves through Beirut's money markets, causing shares in the Solidere company Hariri created to rebuild war-shattered Beirut to tumble.

Mr. Hariri's decision to quit was prompted by mounting opposition to his policies and recent accusations of corruption during the setting-up of Solidere (see page 12).

Damascus will have to decide whether to give in to Mr. Hariri's demand to sack the pro-Syrian ministers who oppose him, analysts say.

The resignation crisis comes at a bad time for the Syrians, who do not want to be faced with turmoil in Lebanon when they are focusing their attention on talks with Israel.

Mr. Hariri's announcement came just days ahead of a peace mission by U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher, due in the region between Tuesday and Thursday in a renewed bid to break the deadlock in Israeli-Syrian talks.

Lebanon and Syria have vowed not to sign a peace deal with Israel without the other.

Mr. Berri has not appeared in public since the latest crisis erupted and has made no comment to the press.

Mr. Hariri aides say Mr. Berri, and his supporters in the cabinet, make it impossible for him to rule because Mr. Berri wants the last word in every decision.

Parliament refused Mr. Hariri special powers when he took office and is now refusing urgent approval of his \$11.38 billion 10-year national reconstruction programme.

Mr. Khaddam, who invited Mr. Berri and Mr. Hariri to Damascus for reconciliation talks, is the Syrian leader who handles Lebanese issues and was expected to preside at the talks.

Mr. Hariri was seen as the only man with the vision to rebuild the country when he was appointed in October 1992 and has won the confidence of international financial markets needed to fund reconstruction.



DRUZE PROTEST: Israeli policemen arrest a Druze cleric during a violent demonstration held by the Druze community in Israel on Sunday. Several thousand Druze demonstrated in front of the prime minister's office in order to gain

more funding for Druze areas, disturbing the cabinet meeting. Rocks were thrown at the police, nine policemen and several demonstrators were injured (AFP photo)

EU lends \$300m to PNA

GAZA CITY (AFP) — The European Commission has pushed through a \$300 million bank loan to the cash-strapped Palestinian self-rule authority, chief negotiator Nabil Shaath said Sunday. The loan, repayable over 25 years at four per cent interest with a five-year grace period, will go to the public and private sectors, Dr. Shaath said in a statement sent to news agencies.

The loan had run into difficulties as the European Investment Bank, which handles the money, had stopped negotiations on grounds that it can only lend to independent countries, Dr. Shaath said.

He said that during an international donors conference in Brussels last month, Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat appealed on the issue to Jacques Delors, head of the European Commission.

Mr. Delors intervened and the European Commission presented guarantees backing the Palestinian National Authority (PNA), said Dr. Shaath who was also in Brussels.

Dr. Shaath said the loan would go to the private sector, via Palestinian banks, to develop tourism and exports such as clothing, flowers and agricultural produce.

Part of it would be used by the authority for long-term projects such as a port, an airport and power supply in the self-rule Gaza Strip.

The Palestinians have complained that only a trickle of the \$720 million promised by international donors for this year had come through.

During the Brussels conference, donors agreed to release \$125 million in emergency funding to the Palestinians, separate from the loan.

Another \$23 million will be invested in urgently-needed projects to improve the infrastructure in the autonomous areas and to create thousands of jobs.

Meanwhile, talks between Israel and the PLO on Palestinian elections, scheduled to resume Monday in Cairo, have been delayed by a day at Israel's request.

Dr. Shaath said Saturday Israel had requested that the talks begin Tuesday. He did not elaborate.

The Palestinian cabinet which met here Saturday urged Israel to comply with the terms of the autonomy deal which launched Palestinian self-rule in the Gaza Strip and West Bank town of Jericho in May.

Dr. Shaath said the redeployment of Israeli troops from Palestinian population centres prior to elections was one of the most difficult issues in Israeli-PLO negotiations.

Qatar says border row with Saudis is transient

DOHA (AP) — Qatar said Sunday it believed a long-running territorial dispute with Saudi Arabia, reignited with border skirmishes earlier this year, could be resolved.

Qatari Foreign Minister Sheikh Hamad Ben Jasim Al Thani said his country had refrained from publicising the latest incidents "out of a desire not to escalate the dispute" and to avoid tarnishing "fraternal relations," with Saudi Arabia and its Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) partners.

Sheikh Hamad spoke in an interview with the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), which was reproduced by the official Qatari News Agency.

The tension peaked last week when Qatar boycotted a GCC ministerial meeting in Riyadh to protest Saudi Arabia's refusal to acknowledge a protest over border "provocations."

The dispute threatened to undermine the GCC annual summit meeting, scheduled to start Dec. 19 in Bahrain.

The Saudi-led alliance also groups Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates and Oman.

"We are optimistic about bypassing our differences with sisterly Saudi Arabia," the Qatari minister said. "We think there are fundamentals which bring together the two sisterly states in many matters. Also we think that we are capable of resolving this dispute with our Saudi brothers."

Qatar says there have been five border incidents this year. A Qatari citizen was wounded in one of them.

Saudi Arabia denied the claims and chided Qatar for not reporting the incidents when they allegedly happened. It said it received one Qatari note in November about only one incident which when investigated turned out to be baseless.

Sheikh Hamad said the provocations included "armed interceptions, seizure of a boat and the arrest" of Qatari travellers and seamen.

Some Qataris were detained for up to two weeks, he said.

In one skirmish two shots were fired wounding a Qatari man on a hunting trip, he said.

The injured man "exists while our Saudi brothers deny that such a thing happened..."

He said he had hoped that the two countries could form a joint committee to investigate the skirmishes.

Asked how the dispute could be resolved, he replied: "If there are good intentions between the two sides, God willing they are there, then solving and bypassing this dispute is possible."

Two people were killed in September 1992 when the border dispute flared into an armed conflict. Egypt mediated a reconciliation.

Israeli delegation arrives

AMMAN (J.T.) — A team of five officials from the Israeli foreign ministry led by Uri Halvon arrived Sunday in Amman for final arrangements connected with the opening of the Israeli embassy next Sunday.

Next Sunday will also witness the opening of the Jordanian embassy in Tel Aviv in implementation of Article 5 of the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty signed on Oct. 26.

A Jordanian Foreign Ministry delegation led by Omar Rifai, head of the ministry's special office, visited Tel Aviv last week and held talks about arrangements for the opening of the Jordanian embassy there.

The opening of the embassies was scheduled to take place on Dec. 10 but was put off by a day because Dec. 10 was a Saturday, an Israeli holiday.

Mr. Rifai told AFP the inauguration will be "kept simple, and the flags will be hoisted by respective charges d'affaires."

Meanwhile, an official statement said a meeting of the Joint Jordanian-Israeli Committee scheduled for today (Monday) has been postponed and a new schedule will be announced later. The statement attributed the postponement to the weather conditions in the country.

Iraq demands Security Council action over ship interceptions

NICOSIA (Agencies) — Iraq has urged the U.N. Security Council to condemn the interception of several Iraqi vessels by U.S. warships in the Gulf and the alleged beating of Iraqi seamen.

The state-run Iraqi News Agency (INA) said late Saturday that the American actions were an attempt to escalate the situation in the Gulf. It provided no direct quotations.

The acting foreign minister, Hamed Yousef Humadi, held Washington fully responsible for the repercussions of the "aggression," the agency reported.

He asked the Security Council to condemn the U.S. interceptions and take appropriate measures to prevent similar incidents in the future, the agency said.

The council, which recently voted to renew international trade sanctions against Iraq, is unlikely to respond to the Iraqi request.

Mr. Humadi reiterated Iraq's claim that some Iraqi seamen were beaten by American inspectors who boarded the vessels, INA said.

The U.S. Navy said Saturday it had boarded five vessels suspected of breaking U.N. sanctions on Iraq in recent days and had to handcuff "uncooperative crewmen" aboard one, an Iraqi tanker.

A spokesman for U.S. Central Command admitted that "minimum force" was used to subdue and handcuff four of the tanker's crewmen who attacked the U.S. boarding team or were "uncooperative" during a search.

The spokesman said three tugs intercepted Wednesday as they sailed south from Iraq were found to be carrying 23,000 tonnes of gasoline between them and were diverted to unidentified ports for investigation.

He said two other vessels, including the tanker, were boarded Thursday in the same area off the Iraqi coast.

Both were allowed to continue after the tanker was found to be carrying only water, he reported.

The Security Council imposed a trade embargo on Iraq in August 1990 after Iraq invaded Kuwait.

The U.S. and allied navies enforce the embargo by patrolling the Gulf and the Red Sea. Thousands of merchant vessels have been intercepted

or boarded since 1990.

In Cairo, U.S. Joint Chief of Staff General John Shalikashvili said the United States will act quickly to snuff out any threat from Iraq.

"Our government position is that we need to move quickly to show that we will not tolerate any attempt from the part of (Iraqi President) Saddam Hussein to threaten peace in the Gulf, Gen. Shalikashvili said.

Iraq on Sunday blamed Kuwait for hindering efforts to resolve the question of Kuwaitis missing since the 1991 Gulf war, one of the obstacles to lifting the U.N. embargo on Baghdad.

The government daily Al-Jumhuriya said Baghdad had "fully cooperated with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and had invited different commissions to carry out investigations across Iraq."

But "Kuwait had rejected all initiatives," it added.

It said the issue of the missing Kuwaitis as well as the questions of restoring Kuwaiti goods and human rights "were evoked by Washington and London as a diversion and disinformation."

Intifada Cubs carry on the fight against Israel

KHAN YUNIS (AFP) — A new generation of Palestinians has taken up the fight against Israel where their older brothers left off — armed only with stones these are the Intifada Cubs.

Many of the children here were too young to join in the Palestinian uprising at its height in the early years after its launch in 1987, but they still dream of forcing Jewish settlers and the remaining Israeli soldiers out of Gaza.

When they are not hunting birds on the sand dunes close to an Israeli army base, the favourite past-time for Zuhdi Abdul Razek, 12 and his pals is throwing stones at the soldiers.

The accords signed between Israel and the PLO, aimed at ending decades of violence and the intifada, seem to have made little difference.

"I am for peace, but not with the settlers still around us," said Mr. Zuhdi.

About 4,000 Israelis live in 19 Jewish settlements across the autonomous Gaza Strip, all of them protected by the Israeli army.

Khan Yunis refugee camp, a squalid warren of tiny concrete houses is surrounded by the Jewish settlements of Ganei Tal and Neve Dekalim on two sides, with the Israeli army in between.

Zuhdi and his friends have been impressed by a wave of suicide bombings by the Islamic Resistance Movement

Hamas, and the smaller Islamic Jihad both in Israel and in Gaza.

"I like Hamas because they carry out operations," Mr. Zuhdi said.

According to Israeli army officials, nine soldiers and one settler have been killed in the Strip since the launch of self-rule in May. Armed attacks in Israel and the West Bank left another 36 dead.

The cubs enjoy taunting the Israeli soldiers, hurling stones with vigour.

Older cubs from the Nasser and Breij camps even managed to climb up an Israeli post outside the tiny Jewish settlement of Netzarim, hoist the Palestinian flag and burn the abandoned belongings.

They made sure to leave behind their "Intifada Cubs" signature emblazoned across nearby walls.

Now, a new high makeshift tower of concrete blocks protects the Netzarim soldiers and a huge sand barrier surrounds them. Other posts across the Strip have also been fortified.

"Each area has its own cubs," Mr. Zuhdi said. "We only go out on the asphalt road separating us from the army, or stay on the sand."

"We don't really have a leader, but our best aim here is Maher," he said pointing to another boy.

Maher Hassan, also 12 was

reticent saying only: "I once hit a soldier's glasses."

The group laughed but said they also wanted to give peace a chance.

When I am older, all this will stop because the settlers will be out of here," said Khalil Mustafa, 14.

"Maybe in a year or two they'll be gone, according to the peace plan."

"Add two more zeroes to your figures," laughed another boy.

Meanwhile Israeli soldiers watch from towers over the sand dunes as the boys hunt and play.

"We first shout to the soldiers to open up their windows," Mr. Mustafa said, pointing to one of the posts in the near distance.

"Sometimes we go up to them at the fence and chat. Some of them speak Arabic, and we have nice conversations and they joke with us," he said.

"Then, we step back and take aim."

By sundown the boys were on their way home and Hussein Abu Rezk, 18 and other teenagers prepared to take over, on the lookout for what they called infiltrators from the Israeli special forces.

The other night, three came through and we called the Palestinian police and stood guard till the infiltrators fled back."



Palestinian children play with stones and toy guns in Nussairat camp in the Gaza Strip. Known as Intifada Cubs, the children, who were too young to join in the intifada at its

height after its launch in 1987, repeatedly stone Israeli soldiers guarding settlements on the strip (AFP photo)

Charismatic 'emir' brings fragile peace to Afghan province

HERAT (AFP) — An island of fragile peace has been created amid the chaos and bloodshed of the war in Afghanistan thanks to the iron-fisted, charismatic rule of one man dubbed "the emir."

U.N. officials and several charity organisations unanimously agree that Ismael Khan has managed to bring relative calm and prosperity to this western province in the two years since he came to power.

The province and adjoining regions have been cleared of local thugs and fighting between rival factions has become a thing of the past.

There are even a number of rag-tag police officers trying to enforce traffic regulations, an incongruous sight in this dusty oasis with a population of around 500,000 camping in the ruins of war, with no electricity or drinking water.

Ismael Khan, nicknamed the "Emir of the Western Provinces," came to power after the collapse of the communist regime in Afghanistan in April 1992 and has gradually succeeded in enforcing a minimum level of security throughout Afghanistan's western provinces.

Herat may now be the only city in Afghanistan where armed men are not visible in the streets, except for a few uniformed officials guarding government buildings.

There are no major signs of tension in the city, or in surrounding regions where Afghan army troops are deployed but which are totally under Ismael Khan's control.

The relative return to normality has led to a revival of commerce in the city, reminiscent of times when the region was on a crossroads of the Silk Route between India and the Middle East.

Shops and grand bazaars in the city are full of goods produced in neighbouring countries — fruits, cosmetics, cooking wares and building materials from Iran, fabrics and vegetable oil from Pakistan, cigarettes, fuel and spare parts from Turkmenistan.

One fabric merchant said Herat was providing neighbouring provinces in Afghanistan with consumer goods,

adding that the city had been turned into Afghanistan's "economic centre."

Herat also serves as a crossroads for goods being smuggled into the country and south to Pakistan.

Every day, dozens of second-hand automobiles and thousands of tonnes of Japanese tires leave Dubai, in the United Arab Emirates, and cross Iran to reach Herat.

Their final destination is northwest Pakistan where they join a hoard of other smuggled goods.

Even though many districts in Herat are still in ruins and government buildings in desperate need of repair, a handful of trade centres are being erected in central Herat and private cars which disappeared 15 years ago are once again "back on the streets."

But foreign observers warned that the relative prosperity, which is limited to the city of Herat, could be short-lived.

One reason is that the money finding its way into Herat comes largely from smuggling drugs and consumer goods and is not invested in economic ventures, one observer said.

A Herat university professor said an upsurge in trade had caused inflation doubling the price of bread, the staple diet for most people, since the beginning of the year.

The average monthly salary of employees is less than \$20 and discontent is growing as most goods become too expensive for the general public.

The stability in the region also appears to be haphazard and under threat from neighbouring regions.

Ismael Khan has so far managed to discourage any attacks from outside either through strong-armed tactics or sheer diplomacy.

Many observers believe security in the region is dependent solely on the governor's charisma.

"If his power recedes or he disappears, the flame of war will rage throughout the entire region," one observer said.

Court bans Egypt from displaying relics abroad

CAIRO (AFP) — Egypt is banned from exhibiting its unique archaeological treasures abroad and has had to cut short a money-spinning display in Japan after a court ruling here, legal officials said Sunday.

The High administrative court in Cairo passed the ban, which is not subject to appeal, after complaints by veteran Egyptian campaigner and archaeologist Nimat Ahmad Fwaid of possible damage to the artefacts.

The court banned the exhibition of 72 ancient pieces which went on display in seven Japanese towns including Tokyo and Osaka in January and was to continue until March 1995.

Fearing the verdict, Egyptian Culture Minister Faruq Hosni brought the treasures back to Egypt two days beforehand.

But he complained about the decision. "This exhibition was a great success and earned two million dollars for Egypt," he grumbled.

The 72 pieces, which have now been in Egypt for three days, have been examined by a team of specialists who say they are in an excellent condition," he added.

The Cairo court said that from now on only ancient artefacts which "are not unique and are not likely to be damaged" can go on display outside Egypt.

The pieces in the Japanese exhibition were made out of wood, glass and limestone, all very fragile materials, and 37 of them were "unique," it added.

It recalled that "several unique ancient artefacts returned in a damaged condition after exhibitions in the United States, Canada and Australia."

The Japanese display includes a bust of queen Hatshepsut, a dagger belonging to the pharaoh Ahmose and a gold chain belonging to the pharaoh's mother — all around 3,500 years old.

The culture ministry argued that such exhibitions were "the best advertisement for Egypt and contribute to the promotion of tourism."

The Pharaoh is seen seated on his throne, wearing a wig with the back of his head protected by a falcon's wings, the bird said to be Neferefre's earthly incarnation.

"Until now we did not what this Pharaoh looked like except from inscriptions and we didn't have a portrait," Jean-Pierre Cortegian from the French Institute for Oriental Archaeology told AFP.

The statue was discovered by a team from the then Czechoslovakia in excavations from 1986 to 1987 at Abusir where the cemetery of the 5th dynasty of Pharaohs has been discovered in the huge Memphis necropolis close to Cairo.

It is being displayed by the Czech Republic which joins Austria, Belgium, Britain, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, The Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Spain and Sweden as exhibitors.

France is showing inscribed clay tablets which are also very rare since few have survived because of the fragile material.

The Europeans were among the first to dig for hidden treasure in the land of the Pharaohs some 200 years ago.

But the exhibition which opened on Thursday will provide the opportunity to show off some of the latest finds.

Among them is a rare statue of Neferefre sculpted in pink limestone. The piece, which is about 4,500 years old, was a real find for Egyptologists as it provides the first clear picture of what the Pharaoh may have looked like.

Other flights (Terminal 2)

06:45 Khartoum (SD)
07:35 Cairo (MS)
12:35 Muscat, Abu Dhabi (GF)
14:00 Hudaideh (IY)
14:30 Kiev (AU)
17:05 Rome (AZ)
17:50 Paris (AF)
18:15 Dubai (EK)
01:10 Amsterdam (KL)

DEPARTURES
Royal Jordanian (RJ)
Flights (Terminal 1)

06:45 Beirut (RJ)
07:00 Agaba (RJ)
10:45 Amsterdam, Cairo (RJ)
12:30 London (RJ)
12:30 Frankfurt (LH)
12:45 Cairo (RJ)
15:45 Bahrain, Doha (RJ)
16:45 Doha (RJ)
18:30 Abu Dhabi (RJ)
21:25 Dubai, Muscat (RJ)
22:30 Damascus (RJ)

ARRIVALS
Royal Jordanian (RJ)
Flights (Terminal 1)

07:20 Sana (RJ)
08:35 Jeddah (RJ)
09:00 Damascus (RJ)
09:15 Riyadh (RJ)
09:15 Agaba (RJ)
09:40 New Delhi (RJ)
09:55 Beirut (RJ)
09:55 Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
16:50 Khartoum (SD)
17:00 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
19:05 Bangkok (RJ)
19:10 Casablanca, Tunis (RJ)

Sudan rejects U.N. report on rights

KHARTOUM (R) — Sudan has rejected a United Nations report accusing it of bombing camps of displaced persons in the war-torn south of the country. Khartoum's state-controlled newspapers said on Sunday.

They said the U.N. report also claims that the number of persons displaced as a result of Sudan's 11-year-old civil war had reached five million but that one million of them had died of hunger while the rest are facing starvation.

The report, according to the newspapers, also accuses the Khartoum government of demolishing squatter camps housing the displaced persons and of sending warplanes to bomb displaced camps in the south of Sudan.

It said Sudan was using humanitarian assistance for political and military purposes.

But Foreign Minister Hussein Abu Saleh was quoted as saying the report was unbalanced and contained untrue and fabricated information.

Mr. Abu Saleh was said to have made the remarks to Margaret O'Keefe, the representative in Sudan of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

The Sudanese minister also accused the world body of deliberately keeping silent on government claims that children in south Sudan were being kidnapped and kept against their will by rebels of the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) in camps at northern Kenya.

The SPLA has been fighting successive Khartoum governments since 1983 in a bid to end the political and economic domination of what it views as a minority Arabised clique in the predominantly Muslim north of the country, Africa's biggest.

The war, mainly fought in the animist and Christian south of Sudan, has claimed the lives of hundreds of thousands of people. Both sides accuse each other of committing atrocities against civilians and using food and humanitarian assistance as a weapon in the conflict.

Government troops have over the past two years scored a string of impressive military successes.

Iran invites rights groups

Chief Justice Ayatollah Morteza Mojtadeai on Saturday invited impartial human rights groups to visit Iran but said U.N. special investigator Reynaldo Galindo Pohl was not welcomed back in the country.

"As soon as... Iran found out that the special representative of the Human Rights Commission, Pohl, had prepared his biased reports under the influence of arrogant powers and deviated groups, (it) did not permit him to enter the country to resume his work," he told the Iranian news agency IRNA.

Iran has come under attack in the past few days from several human rights groups demanding an independent investigation after the death of dissident Iranian writer Ali Akbar Saidi Sirjani while in detention in Tehran.

Mr. Mojtadeai "voiced Iran's readiness to cooperate, except for Pohl, with representatives of international human rights organisations who seek to make studies on Iran without any pre-judgement," IRNA reported.

Mideast trio collects Nobel this week as hazy peace holds

NICOSIA (AFP) — Yasser Arafat, Yitzhak Rabin and Shimon Peres, three of the Middle East's veteran players, collect the Nobel Prize on Saturday for a peace deal blighted by killings and under constant threat from extremists.

Their historic self-rule accord, which launched Palestinian autonomy in the Gaza Strip and West Bank town of Jericho in May, will have returned to its birthplace at the award ceremony in Oslo.

But the very day that the winners were announced on Oct. 14, an Israeli soldier died in a hostage drama. Only last week, a woman soldier was killed by a Palestinian militant armed with an axe.

Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat has found himself under siege from Hamas militants who demand nothing less than the return of all land from the Mediterranean to the Jordan River — which means the destruction of the Jewish state.

Israeli Prime Minister Rabin and his old political

rival Foreign Minister Peres meanwhile have faced the wrath of Jewish hardliners who claim the West Bank as part of "Biblical Israel."

Violence by militants on both sides and a chronic shortage of cash for Mr. Arafat's beleaguered Palestinian self-rule authority have steadily undermined the fragile accord.

Mr. Arafat, who has ended his globe-trotting career to settle in impoverished Gaza, is sorely in need of a prestige boost after the clashes between his police and fundamentalists last month in which 15 Palestinians died.

And amid a resurgence of attacks by Palestinian opponents of the peace process which culminated in a suicide bus bombing in Tel Aviv that killed 22 Israelis, Mr. Rabin has looked a reluctant Nobel laureate.

When the hostage seized by Hamas died along with another soldier in a botched rescue bid, Rabin grimly declared: "I would have preferred to have the two men alive and not to have the Nobel Peace Prize."

But in reality, he lobbied

hard to ensure Mr. Peres would not go down alone in history as Israel's architect of the autonomy deal with the PLO that itself was born in secret talks in Oslo during the summer of 1993.

Apart from a feared attack aimed at ruining the day of the \$930,000 award, on the anniversary of Alfred Nobel's death, Mr. Arafat could face embarrassment if some Norwegian deputies boycott the ceremony at Oslo's Grand Hotel.

The award to the Palestinian leader has already been shaken by the resignation of a Nobel Committee member, Mr. Arafat's "past is too tainted with violence, terrorism and bloodshed," protested Kaare Kristiansen.

But amid the resignation and charges it was premature to hail peace in the Middle East, the committee has stood its ground, as Mr. Arafat and former army "hawk" Mr. Rabin prepare to follow in the footsteps of Mother Teresa of Calcutta.

The committee elected by the Storting, or Norwegian parliament, hopes the award will "serve as an encouragement to all the Israelis and Palestinians who are endeavouring to establish lasting peace in the region."

The Sept. 13, 1993 declaration of principles (DoP) on autonomy signed in Washington is meanwhile struggling to enter a new phase.

After the completion of a handover of civilian powers to the Palestinians in the West Bank last week, negotiations resume this week in Cairo aimed at breaking a stalemate on holding elections.

While the violence escalates, with the Israeli heartland becoming a prime target for Hamas, Israel's army has grown increasingly reluctant to redeploy on the West Bank.

R.I.P.

Carl Adel Al-Uzaizi

Passed away on Dec. 4th, 1994 in London, age 34. Funeral will be held Wednesday 7-12-1994 (in London). Beloved grandchild of Rocks Al-Uzaizi & the late Helana (nee Marar).

Son of Adel Al-Uzaizi & Mavis (nee Hoy). Brother of George, Walced, Emile, Roxanne & Nizar.

Address for condolences:

Emile Al-Uzaizi,
Bishops Park Rd,
116 Bishops Mansions
London SW6
Fax 0044 71 736 0536

In Amman:

Cables: Al-Uzaizi, P.O.Box 5161, Amman. Fax 641078

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

17:00 Pollaouds
17:30 Un Pour Tous
18:00 Les Invention De La Vie
18:30 Le Vent Des Moissons
19:00 New in French
19:15 Magazine Sportif
19:30 Black Beauty
20:00 Boogies Diner
20:30 Quantum Leap
21:10 Shades of L.A.
22:00 News in English
22:30 Headhunters

PRAYER TIMES

04:54 Fajr
06:16 (Sunrise) Doha
11:26 Duhr
14:13 Asr
16:34 Maghreb
17:58 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Switzerland, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 632785.
St. Joseph Church Tel. 634590.
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440.
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757
Terresanta Church Tel. 622366
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541.

Anglican Church Tel. 630851, Tel. 628543.
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331.
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261.
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751.
Armenian International Church Tel. 652526.
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 684195.
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 654932.
Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691.
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

Temperatures will rise slightly with skies partly cloudy, and winds northeasterly. In Agaba, skies will be partly cloudy, winds northerly, and seas calm.

Min./Max. temp. Amman 0 / 7
Agaba 9 / 18
Desert -1 / 8
Jordan Valley 7 / 15

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 6, Agaba 17 Humidity readings: Amman 70 per cent, Agaba 44 per cent.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Fakhri Tayeh 883880
Dr. Salim Daboubi 78751
Dr. Nidal Dahleh 821195
Dr. Bassam Karadshah 759200
Firas pharmacy 661912
Ferdous pharmacy 778336
Al Asma pharmacy 670555
Nairoukh pharmacy 623672
Al Salam pharmacy 636730
Yacoub pharmacy 640945
Shmeisani pharmacy 637660
Nairoukh pharmacy 623672
Najib pharmacy 847632

IRBID:
Dr. Fayer Al Qadi 248743
Alquda pharmacy (—)

ZARQA:
Dr. Tareq Hijawi 985445
Khalid pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Rescue 630341
Civil Defence Emergency 199
Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade 617101
Blood Bank 75121
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police 890390
Public Security Department 630321
Hotel Complaints 608900
Police Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage 897467
Complaints 787111
Complaints 787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 010230
Central Amman Telephone 623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101
Jordan Television 773111
Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority 680100
Jordan Electricity Authority 815615
Electric Power Company 636381
RJ Flight Information 08-53200
Queen Alia Int'l. Airport 08-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 813813/32
Khalidi Maternity, J. Amn 644281/6
Akhil Maternity, J. Amn 642441/2
Jabal Amman Maternity 642362
Malhas, J. Amman 636140
Palestine Shmeisani 664111/4
Shmeisani Hospital 669131
University Hospital 845845
Al-Muhsen Hospital 667227/9
The Islamic, Abdali 661127/7
Al-Ahli, Abdali 664164/6
Italian, Al-Muhajreen 777101/3
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh 775111/26
Army, Marka 891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital 602240/50
Amal Hospital 674155

ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)983323
Zarqa National Hospital (09)905660
Ibn Sina Hospital (09)986752
Al Huma Modern Hospital (09)90990
IRBID:
Princess Basma Hospital (02)725555
Greek Catholic Hospital (02)727275
Al Naif Hospital (02)747100
AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital (03)314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (08)53200. 5, where it should always be verified.

ARRIVALS Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

07:20 Sana (RJ)
08:35 Jeddah (RJ)
09:00 Damascus (RJ)
09:15 Riyadh (RJ)
09:15 Agaba (RJ)
09:40 New Delhi (RJ)
09:55 Beirut (RJ)
09:55 Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
16:50 Khartoum (SD)
17:00 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
19:05 Bangkok (RJ)
19:10 Casablanca, Tunis (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

06:45 Khartoum (SD)
07:35 Cairo (MS)
12:35 Muscat, Abu Dhabi (GF)
14:00 Hudaideh (IY)
14:30 Kiev (AU)
17:05 Rome (AZ)
17:50 Paris (AF)
18:15 Dubai (EK)
01:10 Amsterdam (KL)

DEPARTURES Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

06:45 Beirut (RJ)
07:00 Agaba (RJ)
10:45 Amsterdam, Cairo (RJ)
12:30 London (RJ)
12:30 Frankfurt (LH)
12:45 Cairo (RJ)
15:45 Bahrain, Doha (RJ)
16:45 Doha



Her Royal Highness Princess Sarvath Al Hassan Thursday views Pakistani art works on display at the Royal Cultural Centre. The Princess is accompanied here by Pakistani Ambassador to Jordan Tariq Khan Afridi and Mrs. Cristina Afridi.

Colours, forms of Pakistani art display trends over generations

AMMAN (J.T.) — An exhibition of Pakistani paintings entitled "Colours and Forms" concludes today at the Royal Cultural Centre (RCC) where Her Royal Highness Princess Sarvath Al Hassan opened the event last week. Sponsored and organised by the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan in cooperation with the National Arts Council of Pakistan, the exhibition includes the works of 21 classic and contemporary artists.

The artists used all types of media, from oil, acrylic and watercolours to pastels and etchings, depicting different trends in Pakistani art. The exhibition was displayed in an unusual setting for the RCC.

Organisers made use of the centre's Blue Room which rarely serves as an exhibition venue. The area was kept in darkness, while the paintings were suspended from the ceiling,

'NGOs broaden democratic debate'

AMMAN (Petra) — A two-day workshop on strategies for consolidating the work of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) Sunday started here with an address by President of the Jordan Environment Society (JES) Ahmad Obeidat stressing the role of NGOs in broadening the base of democratic debate and enhancing public participation.

Walter Rudel, representative of Friedrich Naumann Foundation, which organised the workshop in cooperation with JES, said participants in the workshop will learn about NGOs' contributions to public debate, supporting democracy and enhancing the efficiency of such organisations.

They will also learn, he said, about environmental, economic and human rights problems, in addition to maximising the effectiveness of NGOs. Stefan Melnik of the Friedrich Naumann Foundation Academy will lecture on these topics, in addition to related subjects, such as the efficient use of resources, setting priorities, division of labour and cooperation with other organisations, and effects of political liberalisation on economic development.

WHAT'S GOING ON

FILMS

- * Film (in French) entitled "La Crise" at the French Cultural Centre at 8:00 p.m.
- * Film (in English) entitled "Birth of Renaissance: Giotto to Masaccio" (with commentary in Arabic by Dr. Khaled Khreis) at Darat Al Funn at 5:30 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

- * Exhibition of Muna Saudi's private collection of contemporary arts and Jordanian antiques at Abdoun Village.
- * Exhibition of paintings by Sadik Kwaish at the French Cultural Centre.
- * Exhibition by Akram Naji Shaker at Ab'ad Art Gallery.
- * Exhibition of paintings by Dr. Ali Al Ghoul at the Italian Language Centre (Tel. 699348).
- * Exhibition of Pakistani art entitled "Colours and Forms" at the Royal Cultural Centre.
- * Exhibition by artists Lattif Al Khateeb and Muhy Khalifa at the Housing Bank Gallery.
- * Exhibition of paintings by Saadi Al Kaabi at Alia Art Gallery.
- * Exhibition of sculptures by 'Amer Khalil at Baladna Art Gallery.

Israel seeks safe way to expand self-rule

(Continued from page 1)

with light injuries, Israel Radio said. Army sources said Sharif, who had no exit permit for Israel, used a makeshift explosive including cans and nails.

But the Palestinians, speaking on condition of anonymity, said they did not believe the man was carrying explosives. Israeli soldiers guarding checkpoints near the self-rule areas have been tense for weeks following a series of suicide attacks claimed by the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, and the Islamic Jihad organisation. Both

oppose peace with Israel and have vowed to continue attacks.

Relatives in Gaza City denied that Sharif was carrying explosives.

"He was a simple citizen, he had never been arrested by the Israelis," Sharif's brother Yehia told AFP.

"He was not a Hamas member," he added. Hamas said Sharif, who is hard of hearing, was a supporter but stressed he was not on an operation for the group.

Another of Sharif's brothers, Abdul Nasser, however, is a member of Hamas' armed wing, Izzeddin Al Qassam and is serving time in an Israeli jail.

Light rain, some snow expected in hilly areas

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Meteorology Department Sunday said it expected light rain and occasional snow on hilly regions today, with frost formation particularly in the early hours of the day.

A department spokesman said that despite the movement of the low atmospheric pressure to northern Iraq, its effects will continue to be felt in the next two days when skies will be clear to partly cloudy, and temperatures are expected to dip below freezing at night and rise to a maximum of 7°C during the day.

Contrary to the department's predictions of severe snow storms affecting the country Sunday, the weather conditions improved, with no snowfall in the central regions.

Meteorology Department Chief Ali Abanda told Jordan Television Sunday that the original forecast was meant for the southern regions in particular rather than the Amman area alone.

But in Karak, Tafleeh and Shobak heavy snows fell overnight, and in Ras Munif in the north and the Tafleeh heights in the south, nearly 45 centimetres of snow blanketed these areas.

According to Dr. Abanda Amman has not witnessed an early snow fall such as this since 1923, although in 1956 and 1979 snow fell on very

high regions in the north and south only.

The Ministry of Public Works Sunday reported that all roads in the Amman, Madaba, Zarqa, Mafrqa, Jerash and Irbid areas were open adding that some roads like the Kufunje-Jordan Valley Road and Mazar-Tafleeh road were still blocked by snow or landslides.

In Amman, the Higher Civil Defence Council met under the chairmanship of Interior Minister Salameh Hamad to review the general public safety situation in the Kingdom following the storms of the past two days.

The council discussed the formation of voluntary teams to help the concerned authorities in dealing with rescue and other operations.

The council which groups representatives of several government ministries as well as the Civil Defence and Public Security departments reviewed the reopening of culverts and roads and the distribution of sufficient road-clearing equipment.

Abdul Wahab Zoubi, secretary general of the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources, said efforts are under way to ensure sufficient gas, diesel oil and kerosene to various governorates. He said that the storms of the past two days delayed the distribution of fuel.

Japan to supply equipment to Jordanian hospitals

AMMAN (Petra) — The Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA) is to provide Jordan with medical equipment used in the treatment of common diseases in Jordan, according to an agreement signed at the Health Ministry Sunday.

The agreement, which also provides for the installation of the equipment at Jordanian hospitals next year was signed by Health Minister Aref Batayneh and Hama Kawa, head of a JICA team currently on a visit to the Kingdom.

The Health Ministry said in a statement that Sunday's agreement is part of an 18-month-old agreement between the ministry and JICA whereby JICA will provide the Kingdom with \$7 million worth of equipment.

The JICA team earlier met Labour Ministry officials to discuss Jordan's request for the establishment of an institute to train Jordanian personnel employed in the mining industry, and also to promote the manufacture of equipment in Jordan.

Discussion also covered the general situation in the Jordanian labour market and the adverse effects on it resulting from the return of thousands of expatriates from Kuwait in the wake of the Gulf crisis, as well as the Labour Ministry's attempts to train and absorb workers through the help of the Vocational Training Corporation (VTC) centres.

Head of the Jordanian side, Ayoub Bitatseh, briefed the JICA officials on the volume of the guest workforce, the problem of unemployment and government policies on employment-related issues. A ministry statement said that the meetings were within the frameworks of a Japanese-Jordanian project to promote vocational training in the Kingdom.

Jordan to observe Volunteers Day

AMMAN (J.T.) — Jordan today observes International Volunteers Day as called for by the United Nations and in line with the Jordanian government's policy of promoting the work of voluntary and charitable societies in the Kingdom, according to Khalil Al Banna, head of the Social and Cultural Department at the Ministry of Social Development.

Speaking on the eve of the event which is usually observed on Dec. 5, Mr. Banna said there are 740 voluntary societies in Jordan, of which 21 are non-Jordanian, all working in cooperation with the Ministry of Social Development.

He said that nearly 50,000 people are involved in voluntary and charitable missions at these institutions under the overall umbrella of the General Union of Voluntary Societies (GUVS).

Paying tribute to their work, Mr. Banna said that they complement the work of the ministry and its affiliated departments in various governorates.

The government encourages the creation of voluntary

groups in all governorates and settlements and provides assistance to their endeavours towards socio-economic development, added Mr. Banna.

These societies are considered "schools" teaching the public the benefits of social solidarity and helping the ministry in providing urgently needed assistance to the under-privileged groups, Mr. Banna said.

A message by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Administrator James Gustave Speth on International Volunteers Day released here Sunday said the marking of this day was important because it draws attention to the development successes resulting from people working directly with people and from individuals helping other individuals to improve their lives.

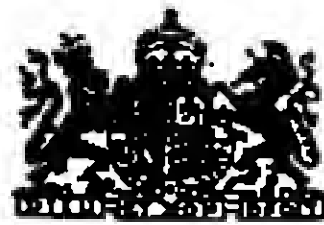
Because of their ability to work with individuals and their impartial commitment to development, said Mr. Speth, volunteers have a comparative advantage in helping build trust and solidarity within and among communities.

Announcement

Entries for the Theory and Practical Examinations of the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music will be accepted from 10 to 15 December 1994. The practical examination will be held in Amman next spring 1995.

For registration and further information about syllabuses and regulations, please contact the local representative:

The National Music Conservatory/Noor Al Hussein Foundation
Jabal Amman, Atiyat Building, Behind the Embassy of Kuwait
P.O.Box 926687, Amman/Jordan
Tel. 687620, Fax 687621



ASSOCIATED BOARD
OF THE ROYAL SCHOOLS OF MUSIC

Zarqa police round up 14 burglary suspects

By Rana Hussein

Special to the Jordan Times

ZARQA — Zarqa police Sunday announced that over a two-week period they arrested 14 suspects in more than 100 burglaries in different parts of the Kingdom, according to Brigadier Abdul Khader Oran, director of the Zarqa Police Department.

Brig. Oran said the latest arrest took place on Nov. 20, when police apprehended four men, aged between 35-46, suspected of burglarising 50 homes during the day-time in Zarqa suburbs.

He said, the items stolen from the homes included jewellery, money, electronic equipment and other valuables.

"Our investigators became suspicious of a man driving around Ruseifeh suburbs where most of the burglaries occurred and pulled him over for questioning," Brig. Oran said during a press conference.

After searching his car, he added, police units found skeleton keys and foreign currency.

According to Brig. Oran, the suspect, a Whitard resident, confessed to committing 50 burglaries since 1991, including 29 homes in Amman, 17 in Zarqa, 3 in Salt

and one in Irbid, with the help of three other individuals.

Brig. Oran said that the main suspect, has a long criminal record, having been charged with burglaries and drug abuse.

"When we searched his house, we recovered most of the stolen goods, and we found hashish and jewellery hidden in a baby diaper," the official said.

He added that the wife of the suspect is also in police custody charged with being an accessory after the fact. The woman was not identified.

The police director called on burglary victims to go to the Zarqa Police Department to identify their goods.

Brig. Oran said that the authorities also arrested four gang members in connection with 10 robberies in Amman and Zarqa.

He identified the main suspect as M.A.L.S., 27, of Jabal Joufeh.

In another case, police received a report on Nov. 20 from a refrigerator factory that 16 refrigerators were missing from the factory.

Investigations led to the arrest of the factory guard and two other individuals.

Police are also questioning an individual who is sus-

pected of burglarising 20 homes and stealing 19 car stereos in the Zarqa area.

According to Brig. Oran, the man confessed to the crime and led investigators to two other individuals involved with him.

He said most of the suspects had previous records and were unemployed.

Meanwhile, four people were killed in two separate incidents in Amman on Sunday, Civil Defence Department (CDD) and police reports showed.

In Baqaa camp, two people were killed after being hit by a car, the reports said.

Kawthar Mohammad M. 27, and her 4-year-old daughter Wala'a were attempting to cross a street when they were struck by a taxi, reports said.

Police would not release any further information, but said they apprehended the driver of the vehicle for questioning.

Also on Sunday, two people died of carbon monoxide poisoning in Al Rajib area near Sahab while sleeping with a kerosene heater lit.

According to the report, the victims were Ibrahim Omran, 26, and Mohammad Ali, 20, both Egyptian nationals.

Lebanon, Jordan agree to extend agricultural trade protocol — minister

AMMAN (J.T.) — Jordan and Lebanon have agreed in talks, held last week in Beirut to extend and promote a 1993 trade protocol primarily on the exchange of agricultural products, according to Minister of Agriculture Mansour Ben Tarif Sunday.

Speaking upon his return from Beirut Sunday for the talks at the head of a Jordanian delegation, the minister said Jordan and Lebanon will "stick to the original protocol" concerning the exchange of agricultural products and the dates on which they can be made depending on seasonal production.

He said the two sides would continue to hold meetings whenever necessary to discuss each other's requirements of additional amounts of goods.

According to Salem Lawzi,

head of the Agricultural Marketing Organisation (AMO), who accompanied the minister on the visit, Jordan annually exports to Lebanon eggplants, tomatoes, pepper, beans, squash and melons and imports Lebanese cherries, potatoes, pears, and grapes, but the balance of agricultural trade is clearly in Jordan's favour.

The two sides reached agreement on a mechanism to overcome obstacles impeding trade and stressed the need for ensuring the continued flow of agricultural products to the markets of either country, said the minister.

He said that he requested that the Lebanese authorities reduce the rate of tariffs and duty levied on trucks transporting Jordanian products to the Lebanese markets, and

the Lebanese side has agreed to arrange for contacts between the ministries of transport in the two countries to work out a mutually satisfactory arrangement.

According to Mr. Ben Tarif, the two sides agreed on giving preference and priority to imports of agricultural products from each other's countries.

Apart from the talks with government officials, the Jordanian delegation which also included several merchants, toured the Bekaa, Zahleh, and Saïda areas and met with local farmers to explain Jordan's views regarding the exchanges of produce.

Mr. Ben Tarif said he was received by Lebanese President Elias Hrawi to whom he conveyed greetings to the Lebanese leadership and people.

University plans dialogue, students claim deadlock on 60% grade

By Rana Hussein

Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — University of Jordan officials and student union representatives were still on opposite sides of the fence Sunday, with administrators planning meetings on Tuesday and Wednesday between students, administration and faculty members, and student union members saying that negotiations had reached a deadlock.

A senior university official told the Jordan Times Sunday that the administrative committee scheduled two separate meetings, one on Tuesday between students and the committee, and one Wednesday between the students and university faculty to discuss the 60 per cent grade regulation.

The student union is demanding an alteration to the 60 grade regulation which stipulates that students retaking courses they have failed can only attain a maximum of 60 per cent.

"The committee which was appointed by the university (to study the issue) is still in place, but it seems that the student union members are trying to meet with each committee member separately to try to persuade him to meet their demands, because they felt that their demands would not be met," the official said.

"So far, the appointed committee did not reach any decision and is still studying the request, and we cannot prejudge matters. The student union wants the committee to simply rule in their favour," he added.

Meanwhile, the student union issued a statement saying that negotiations between the committee and the student union over the weekend had failed.

The statement accused the committee of delaying the matter and said that the student union would appeal to higher government officials to resolve the matter, and then will hold a press conference on Tuesday to announce their next step.

This issue does not fall within the government's jurisdiction, it is an internal university matter, the university official explained.

He said the student union earlier approaches the Ministry of Higher Education, but were told to discuss the matter with the university administration.

"The student union is avoiding dialogue, and they will be responsible of their own acts," he added.

The student union first organised a protest on Nov. 26, threatening to boycott classes and organise further protests if the university administration did not reply to their demands.

On Nov. 29, more than 1,000 students boycotted classes in major faculties, then organised a march on campus followed by demonstrations in front of the president's office on campus.

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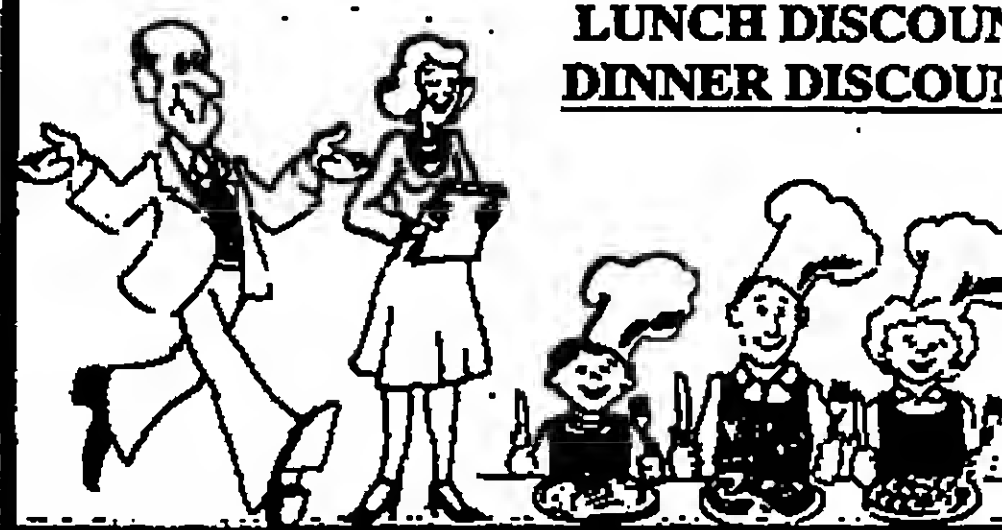
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Dhaka says Ansar mutiny quelled

DHAKA (R) — The Bangladesh government said Sunday that troops had quelled a three-day mutiny by thousands of auxiliary police over demands for higher wages and job security.

"The misguided members of the Ansar Force (as the auxiliaries are called) have surrendered to law-enforcing agencies in various parts of the country," an official statement said.

"The misguided Ansars have surrendered at Shafipur Ansar Academy, Khilgaon Ansar Headquarters, Lalmonirhat in the north, Navaran in western Jessore district and Faiz Lake in Chittagong," the statement said. "Discipline has been restored at all these places," the statement concluded without giving details.

Unconfirmed reports earlier said up to four Ansars had been killed and many wounded as regular police and paramilitary soldiers tried to overpower them.

"One of our men is dead and several are injured," one auxiliary shouted at people

after soldiers stormed the auxiliary police headquarters at Khilgaon early Sunday.

An official, who declined to be identified, quoted police as telling him that up to three auxiliaries had been killed, many wounded and more than 1,000 arrested in Shafipur, north of Dhaka.

"All auxiliaries at their Khilgaon headquarters were forced to surrender but the process was still not over in Shafipur," he told Reuters.

The reports of the deaths could not be confirmed by other sources.

A report at the scene in Khilgaon said soldiers used rocket-launchers to demolish the walls of the headquarters.

Troops went into action following a high-level security meeting Saturday night, police said.

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia headed the meeting attended by army chief Lieutenant-General Abu Saleh Mohammad Nasim, Home Secretary Azimuddin Ahmad and other top officials.

Fighting broke out when

regular police and paramilitary soldiers attempted to disarm and flush out hundreds of rebel auxiliary police holed up in their headquarters, witnesses said.

They said police used tear-gas and rubber bullets while soldiers fired with machineguns in battles against the rebels, who attacked with rifle fire.

Army helicopters hovered overhead, which the Ansars claimed had fired on them. Witnesses said they saw helicopters dropping tear gas canisters.

Reports from Shafipur Sunday said helicopters also attacked the academy and shelled neighbouring areas, trying to overpower the auxiliaries.

In Khilgaon, Lutfur Rahman Binu, personal photographer of the prime minister, said his home had been hit by several canisters, forcing his family to flee.

"Much of my house has been damaged. Glasses have been smashed and windows broken. Not only my family,

our neighbours also fled to safety," he told Reuters by telephone.

Others Khilgaon residents said they woke up to hundreds of gunshots, some fired by auxiliaries and some by troops, and rushed to safety. Journalists saw Ansars carrying wounded colleagues and heard calls for help as smoke poured from the headquarters' ground.

They said 664 Ansars surrendered at the headquarters where soldiers seized 740 rifles.

The trouble began Thursday when thousands of Ansars, a back-up force recruited to help regular police keep law and order, mutinied at the Ansar Academy in Shafipur, a northern suburb of Dhaka, over demands for higher wages and job security.

The rebellion soon spread to Dhaka and other districts, officials said.

Officials put the number of Ansars at more than 25,000, one third of them armed with rifles.

Opposition has chance to prove itself with Taipei mayoralty win

TAIPEI (AFP) — Taiwan's main opposition party has been given a chance to prove it can run the government and perhaps break the 45-year rule of the Kuomintang (KMT) Party after winning a key election over the weekend.

Voters in the capital Taipei appeared more concerned about traffic congestion and poor municipal services than the loftier issues of democracy and nationalism when they elected a candidate of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) as their new mayor Saturday.

"The city is too inefficient

and corrupt," admitted Lee Yu-Shiang, a member of the ruling Nationalist Party, who was not surprised his party's incumbent candidate lost the race.

Taipei businessman Lu Tse-Wei said the city's budget overruns and constantly delayed mass-transit system reflected what residents consider to be a poorly managed municipality.

Construction of the new \$1.5 billion City Hall, which opened earlier this year, was plagued with corruption involving contractors using inferior materials.

"I think these issues were

more important to people than Taiwan nationalism," Mr. Lu said. "The new mayor will have to be tested to see if he can do any better."

Saturday was the first time since 1964 that citizens of Taipei have had the chance to elect their mayor. It was also the first multi-party election for the post.

As mayor of Taipei, DPP candidate Chen Shui-bian, 43, will be in the highest position ever held by an opposition party in Taiwan. He successfully promoted an image of himself as a clean-cut politician,

India jolted by spy scandal

NEW DELHI (AFP) — A lurid sex-and-spy scandal in India's main space agency has sparked fears that closely guarded space and military secrets have now travelled beyond the country's shores.

Security has been tightened at strategic centres since Oct. 21, when detectives arrested two women from the Maldives on charges of using sex and money to obtain secrets from the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and selling them to the past two years to unnamed overseas buyers. There were other arrests within the agency as well.

"It was a classic Mata Hari operation," an official said, referring to the legendary woman who spied for Germany during World War I.

"We cannot assess the extent of the damage right away, but we know for sure that others are privy to some of our space and military secrets," said a senior government official.

But ISRO Chairman Krishnaswamy Kasturirangan said the leaked secrets posed no threat to the organisation.

"These are pin-pricks for us. I am sure the boys will recover quickly. But I cannot quantify (secrets which have changed hands)," Mr. Kasturirangan told AFP.

He said many of the arrested suspects were not privy to secrets and added that no country would try to build complex space rockets or missiles based on stolen data.

The ISRO successfully launched its most powerful space rocket on Oct. 15 in a bid to carve out a niche in the multi-billion-dollar commercial satellite launch market.

Its scientists have also built a ballistic missile and an array of combat rockets, despite attempts by Western nations, including the U.S., to block India's Integrated Guided Missile Development Programme.

Workers reportedly killed at secret U.S. factory

LONDON (AFP) — Workers at a secret factory building advanced U.S. warplanes in the Nevada Desert have died from the toxic substances used in their manufacture, the Observer reported Sunday.

The paper, quoting relatives, said six people had been killed in recent years by the effects of paints, solvents and fuels which were so secret they had to be disposed of on site.

The base, dubbed Area 51, Groom Lake, or Dreamland by the workers and test pilots, was currently developing an aircraft codenamed Aurora capable of flying at 5,000 miles (8,000 km) an hour, the Observer said.

It said a U.S. lawyer, Jonathan Turkey, would begin legal action against the U.S. government Monday to admit the Groom Lake facility existed, so as to bring it within the jurisdiction of the law.

"Workers at Dreamland

are suffering terrible, sometimes lethal disease as noxious clouds bulge and swirl across the terrain" from the burning of the secret substances in open trenches, the Observer said.

It quoted Helen Frost, whose husband Robert died in 1989, as saying, "he came home from work saying 'my eyes are on fire, my face is on fire'."

"He lost weight rapidly (...), his face peeled, his skin began to crack and bleed," Mrs. Frost said. When he finally died he was almost blind.

Mrs. Frost said the base workers "can't talk to the doctor about their work, because it doesn't exist, and it was made clear that if they did, they'd go to jail."

The Observer said that for 40 years Area 51 had been "the keeper of America's darkest military secrets," developing the U-2 and SR-71 Blackbird spy planes and the Stealth fighter before the Au-

Yeltsin orders probe into security squad bank raid

MOSCOW (AFP) — President Boris Yeltsin has ordered an inquiry into a commando raid by government security agents in central Moscow which had caused "deep anxiety in public opinion and banking circles," his spokesman said.

Spokesman Viacheslav Kostikov, quoted by ITAR-TASS news agency, said the president had noted the "incompetent absence of coordination between the special services and the forces of order in the conduct of this operation."

Some 20 heavily-armed men in black military-style dress stalked out the headquarters of Mostbank, one of Russia's most powerful commercial banks, for some three hours before pouncing late Friday in order to seize documents confirming the involvement of commercial banks in the ruble's plunge on Oct. 11, ITAR-TASS reported earlier.

Mr. Kostikov said Mr. Yeltsin had been informed of allegations of violations of human rights during the raid and would take the severest measures if they turned out to be true.

NTV, which is funded by Mostbank, said several of the bank's drivers had been forced to lie face down in the snow for an hour. Two of them had been seriously hurt

and required hospital treatment, Russia's only private television station said.

The squad also disarmed security guards and encircled the building to ensure nobody could enter.

ITAR-TASS quoted the special services, the FSK, successors to the Soviet KGB, as saying the action was taken "strictly in accordance with the presidential decree on reinforcing the fight against banditry and organised crime," and was given the go-ahead by a commission of enquiry investigating allegations of foul play regarding the ruble's collapse.

The enquiry has turned up "links between the board of Mostbank, corrupt functionaries inside state and municipal organs" and various other players in the alleged currency speculation by the banks.

Mostbank President Vladimir Gussinski condemned the raid as an attempt to intimidate one of the country's leading financial groups in the country.

"We consider this to be an attempt to blame us for financing the independent media, a grievance that we've addressed in recent times," Mr. Gussinski said in a telephone interview with AFP.

Mostbank is a financial partner of reformist daily Sevostnia as well as NTV.



Photo taken from a video footage shows a Philippine Navy frogman searches the capsized ferry boat Cebu City lying on its left side at the seabed about 100 feet under water for the bodies of missing passengers and crew including the ship captain. The ferry boat carrying 598 passengers and crew was rammed by the Singapore-registered cargo ship Kota Suria in Manila Bay (AFP photo)

Chief mate of Manila Bay disaster ferry found alive near the shore

MANILA (R) — The Filipino chief mate of the ill-fated ferry Cebu City was found alive but injured near shore Sunday, two days after his vessel sank at the mouth of Manila Bay with a feared loss of more than 140 lives.

"He was reportedly recovered by a fisherman this morning. He was alive but injured," Coast Guard spokesman Amado Samante said.

The spokesman said Reynaldo Boludo was found floating close to the shore of Cavite province after being washed out of Manila Bay and down the coast. He had no details of his injuries.

A spokesman for the ship's owners, William Lines, confirmed Mr. Boludo had been found but had no further information.

Mr. Boludo is the most senior officer of the inter-

island ferry to be discovered alive since it sank before dawn Friday after colliding with the Singapore-registered container ship Kota Suria.

The Cebu City's Captain Wenceslau Lampong is among more than 100 people still missing after the accident. More than 450 were recovered alive.

Divers scouring the wreck of the 2,452-tonne Cebu City Sunday recovered three more bodies from the hull.

EU leaders to meet on Eastern Europe

BRUSSELS (R) — European Union (EU) leaders hold their end-of-year summit this week, grappling with the question of how to bring Eastern Europe into the fold without jeopardising their own economic and political goals.

Meeting Friday and Saturday in the industrial town of Essen, in Germany's Ruhr Valley, the EU leaders will try to agree on a strategy for bringing Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Romania, Bulgaria and Slovakia into the EU.

But, in a reflection of sharp internal differences over what the move will mean to the union, the summit is set to avoid most of the difficult questions, notably when enlargement will take place and how preparing for it will be paid for.

Ensuring political and economic stability in Eastern Europe has become the obsession of Western European policy makers, constantly reminded of the alternative by the anarchy of Bosnia.

NATO foreign ministers last week dedicated most of a two-day meeting on discussions about bringing the former Warsaw Pact rivals into the alliance.

On Monday, meanwhile, the 53-nation Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe will start a summit concerned with ways to secure stability in the former

Communist East.

But while NATO's most vexing question is how to bring in the Easterners without triggering a torrent of security concerns in Russia — underlined again last week by Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev — many of the EU's problems are internal.

On the question of when the six Easterners should join, for example, the EU has steadfastly avoided agreeing a date before it works out itself what it wants to become.

With Russia, Sweden and Finland already set to join in January, it is quite clear to many in the union that the bloc cannot set a firm timetable for growing to 21 without answering questions about how integrated it intends to be.

"There are going to be no enlargement (negotiations) with anybody until after the IGC," said one senior EU diplomat, referring to the EU's inter-Governmental Conference (IGC) on its future, set for 1996.

This has disappointed Eastern European leaders, who have been invited to lunch with their EU counterparts at the summit Saturday.

They are keen for a date to be set before they embark on the EU's pre-membership strategy of harmonising their laws with EU ones.

The Eastern leaders are likely to be equally dis-

sappointed when it comes to money.

Plans for 7.07 billion European Currency Unit (\$8.47 billion) to be made available over five years to help the Easterners prepare for membership were put off last week after southern EU states essentially demanded more money to help development in North Africa and the Middle East.

The southerners, led by France and Spain, have been unnerved by the EU's moves to incorporate first the Nordic countries and then the Eastern ones, fearing a shift in the balance of power.

Responding to this, the European Commission has proposed a 5.5 billion ECU (\$6.6 billion) programme for the Mediterranean, a price far too high for the taste of many northern states.

The result is that the EU leaders will be presented simply with a proposal calling for a minimum level of already budgeted funding for both projects.

The summit's other main item is consideration of a follow-up to an economic plan agreed last year to create jobs and boost Europe out of the recession it was in at the time.

The summit is being urged to endorse a list of 14 top-priority cross-border road and rail projects valued at 91 billion ECUs (\$110 billion) and to find ways of paying for them.

Kinkel threatens to resign

WEIMAR, Germany (AFP) — German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel threatened to resign Saturday if his liberal party rules at its congress next week that its members cannot be both parliamentarians and ministers.

Mr. Kinkel told party members at the regional congress in Weimar in the east of the country that a ban on doubling up offices would be impractical.

Mr. Kinkel, whose Free

Democrat Party is a junior partner in Chancellor Helmut Kohl's coalition, also took a sideswipe at new radicals in the party, blaming them in part for the decline in the party's fortunes, which he said had coincided with the departure of the FDP's old guard.

In the past year the FDP has seen itself ousted from nine of the 16 state parliaments in the German Federation and from the European

Parliament, and it won only 6.9 per cent of the votes in the Oct. 16 general election, down from 11 per cent four years ago.

Mr. Kinkel's arch rival for the FDP leadership, former Economy Minister Juergen Moellenmann, suffered a stunning reverse Saturday when he was trounced in a party contest for the leadership of the North Rhine-Westphalia region in the west of the country.

Gurkhas could take over all U.N. peacekeeping roles

HONG KONG (AFP) — U.N. peacekeeping operations, currently dogged by confused command structures and a lack of flexibility, could take on a whole new look if an unofficial proposal to use Gurkhas is approved, defence experts say.

The proposal, which has found favour among some senior military leaders in a number of countries, aims to give the United Nations a military command structure it does not have at the moment so as to avoid much of the confusion and lack of decision which has plagued many operations.

Under the present system, when the U.N. Security Council passes a resolution member countries pledge troops on an ad hoc basis with usually one country appointed to overall command, such as the United States in the Gulf War.

But defence experts say this lack of command structure can create confusion on the ground, delays in deploying troops and makes decision-making difficult with so many different national military headquarters involved.

Establishing a single unit

would cut through many of the problems, they believe, and the British Army's Brigade of Gurkhas, with their hallmark toughness and high standards of discipline could be the ideal choice.

The Gurkhas also have the experience, having already been deployed in places like the Gulf, Cyprus, Rwanda and Bosnia, explained Brigadier-General Mervin Lee, the officer in charge of the Brigade of Gurkhas, based in Hong Kong but undergoing a phased withdrawal to Britain.

Brig. Lee stressed that the proposal was still very much just an idea.

"Gurkhas are very good natured and tolerant... (which would make them) the ideal type for coming between two warring factions, by setting a good example of tough soldiers who will act only when necessary," he said.

Their reputation as some of the finest soldiers in the world, carved out of nearly 200 years service with the British army, would also make clear to these factions that

the Gurkhas were not to go ahead. The brigade would need to expand to around 15,000 men, requiring additional recruitment from Nepal, which has said that in principle it has no objection to the idea.

"The brigade would be funded by the U.N. and be on call to the U.N., but based and trained in the U.K.," the brigadier said.

"I cannot envisage, given the right equipment and training, any job which couldn't be undertaken by the Gurkhas."

If the unit needed other facilities, like heavy armour, this could come from other British units who often will have worked and trained with the Gurkhas as part of their regular duties, he said.

"Britain is good at providing military forces," particularly highly professional, small combined arms task forces, he said, "so why don't we market our ability?"

Other countries might also feel that their troops could miss out on the experience provided by a peacekeeping mission, Brig. Lee added.

"While in principle it's a good idea, in practice there are difficulties," he said.

As troops on U.N. missions are paid for by the world body "many countries get hard currency from seconding troops to the U.N.," he said, and in the case of poorer countries they might well not want to lose an important source of revenue.

Other countries might also feel that their troops could miss out on the experience provided by a peacekeeping mission, Brig. Lee added.

"While in principle it's a good idea, in practice there are difficulties," he said.

Heidi Fleiss in shock after convictions

LOS ANGELES (R) — Heidi Fleiss, the so-called Hollywood madam, was facing a minimum of three years in jail Saturday after being found guilty of providing prostitutes to undercover police officers posing as Japanese businessmen.

Ms. Fleiss, whose potential "black book" revelations of rich and famous clients sent waves of near-panic through Hollywood studio executive suites, was found not guilty of supplying cocaine to the detectives. In a telephone interview with the Los Angeles Times from her father's home shortly after the verdicts, Ms. Fleiss said, "I'm still in shock. My heart has never been so fast. I heard them say guilty on the first count, and then I just couldn't hear anymore. I just went blank."

As the verdicts were read out by the jury forewoman Friday, Ms. Fleiss was visibly upset, laying her head on the defence table and slamming her hands down on the table. "My father was crying," she told the Times. "He said, 'be strong and think of something positive,' but I can't even think." Ms. Fleiss's list of clients remained secret, but tinseltown's dirty linen could still be washed in public when she faces federal charges of laundering the proceeds of her allegedly lucrative call-girl ring in a number of secret bank accounts. After returning the three guilty verdicts and one not guilty decision Friday, the jury of seven men and five women told Judge Judith Champagne they could not agree on the remaining two charges of pandering, and the judge dismissed the panel.

Deputy District Attorney Alan Carter, who prosecuted Ms. Fleiss, told reporters that under California law Ms. Fleiss would have to go to jail for a minimum of three years.

Save water shower with a friend

SYDNEY (AP) — Once just a mildly risqué bumper-sticker slogan, now it is official government policy: "Save water. Shower with a friend." The Sydney Water Utility is launching the campaign to help combat the record low levels of local reservoirs after months of drought characterised as the worst of the century. "We must save water, and showering with a friend is one way to do it," said Robert Webster, the official in charge of water policy. Other conservation efforts, such as banning daytime lawn watering, have cut water consumption 15 per cent in recent months, he said. But the levels of dams are still falling. Mr. Webster said, urging Sydneysiders to double up under the shower head.

Peru town flees rat invasion

LIMA (AFP) — An invasion of hungry rats has stripped the town of Quinocay in the hills outside Lima of all its food and sent townspeople fleeing, town authorities said. Antonio Valeriano, the town's mayor, asked the Peruvian federal government to declare a state of emergency because of the food shortage. "Quinocay is currently populated only by old people, women and children struggling for survival since all the men of working age are in neighbouring areas or in Lima," he said.

Victim finds if you want help, don't ask a policeman

LAGOS (AFP) — Lagos resident Lucas Agom is looking for a change in his luck after an armed gang burst into his home looking for cash. Although he persuaded the gang to spare his life during Tuesday's hold-up, the gang decided to spend the night at his house, and proceeded to drink all his beer. The following day they frog-marched the hapless Agom to his bank and forced him to empty his account of 120,000 naira — around \$5,500. When he went to report the attack to the police Thursday he recognised the chief inspector as the gang leader, took fright, and ran out of the building, only to be knocked down by a truck as he crossed the street. Agom has since recovered from some of his injuries and opted for the quiet life back in his home village, the Nigerian Tribune daily newspaper reported Saturday. The unnamed police inspector is meanwhile cooling his heels in jail.



Russian paratroopers train in a field camp in Beslan in Northern Ossetia. This airborne unit was flown in several days ago and deployed some 50 kilometres from the border

Khasbulatov quits Chechenya as Russia troops gather

GROZNY, Russia (R) — A key Chechen opposition figure, former Russian parliament Chairman Ruslan Khasbulatov, abruptly left the breakaway Russian region Sunday as Moscow's troops massed threateningly on its borders.

"He has left the Chechen Republic," his brother Yamlikhan Khasbulatov told reporters in the Khasbulatov home and political base at Tolstoi-Yurt, adding that Ruslan had returned to Moscow.

A statement by Russian Khasbulatov, obtained by Reuters Sunday, said he was leaving because the appearance of Russian troops at the frontier had made a nonsense of what he styles his peacekeeping activities.

"Russia is bringing in troops. As you know I was always against this development in events," Mr. Khasbulatov's Saturday statement said. "I think we can settle the conflict ourselves."

"My role has been made superfluous, the role of an

observer of events which I can no longer influence... and so the four-month activities of the peacekeeping group has been brought to nothing."

"In these conditions I must take a very difficult but in my view the only right decision — to break off my activity and return to Moscow."

Mr. Khasbulatov, briefly imprisoned in Moscow last year after defeat in a political struggle with President Boris Yeltsin, moved back to his ethnic homeland this summer to mediate between its nationalist government and Moscow-backed opposition.

But he quickly threw his lot in with the opposition, denouncing the separatist government of Chechen President Dzhokhar Dudayev as a "dictatorial regime." Mr. Dudayev unilaterally declared Chechenya independent of Russia in 1991.

Events in Chechenya have taken a turn for the worse in recent weeks, with fighting intensifying around the mountain region. Russia

threatened Tuesday to clamp down hard if Mr. Dudayev's men and their opponents did not lay down their arms by Thursday.

Although Russia has admitted to no military action since then, the opposition says unidentified planes which bombed the capital Grozny Thursday night were Russian and large numbers of Moscow troops are being moved up to the Chechen frontier.

Nineteen Russian soldiers are being held by the Chechen government after being captured fighting with the opposition. Moscow says they are "volunteers," but two prisoners freed Saturday said they had been seconded to Chechenya by Russian counterintelligence.

Moscow recognises the opposition Provisional Council of Mr. Khasbulatov's ally Umar Avturkhanov as the official government of Chechenya.

But rifts in the shaky opposition ranks, as Mr. Avturkhanov and Mr. Khas-

bulatov argued over tactics, have more than once given Mr. Dudayev a breathing space.

Opposition forces inexplicably pulled back from an attack on the Chechen capital Grozny in October. In November, they attacked but failed to seize the capital.

"This shook people's trust and gave birth to disappointment and a lack of trust in a favourable outcome," Mr. Khasbulatov's statement said. "Now (control) of the Chechen crisis has passed from our hands into the hands of certain people in Russia."

Reuters Television journalist Taras Protsyuk filmed Russian troops advancing from Chermen Base in a region of south Russia bordering Chechenya. On Saturday, one unit moved 60 kilometres to encamp just 30 kilometres from the border.

On Sunday, he said three more columns advanced from Chermen in North Ossetia region, equipped with heavy mortars, armoured personnel carriers and trucks full of ammunition.

To reach Chechenya, Russian troops would have to pass through tiny Ingushetia region, whose people are ethnic kin of the Chechens and fiercely opposed to Mr. Yeltsin. Ingush President Ruslan Aushev said Ingushis would not let them through.

"We will not let (Russian) troops, tanks and ammunition pass through our territory," he told Reuters Television in a Sunday interview in his regional capital, Nazran.

Mr. Avturkhanov said Russian troops would enter Chechenya on Dec. 15 and tried to convince opposition supporters that Moscow was acting in their best interest.

"Alone, we cannot get rid of Dudayev," he said. "Russia is aware that we can't do anything without the assistance of a third party and is therefore coming to help us."

Britain, France launch last ditch Bosnia peace drive

SARAJEVO (Agencies) — Britain and France launched a last-ditch diplomatic drive to end the war in Bosnia Sunday but neither the Serbs nor the Muslim-led Bosnian government seemed willing to compromise.

British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd and French Foreign Minister Alain Juppe were due to meet Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic in Belgrade in the hope that he can exert more pressure on Serbs in Bosnia to accept peace.

Mr. Milosevic's influence over the Bosnian Serbs has diminished since he cut military and political ties with his former proteges last August in exchange for an easing of international sanctions against Belgrade.

Mr. Hurd has issued a warning that the United Nations peacekeeping force could be pulled out of Bosnia within weeks if there is no settlement.

"We have some weeks, I hope, unless something disastrous further occurs on the ground, and we have to use them," Mr. Hurd said on BBC Television Saturday night.

In order to get the Serbs back to the negotiating table, the international contact group on Bosnia — the United States, Russia, Britain, Germany and France — has let it be known that it is prepared to modify the current peace plan.

There are signs the contact group will sweeten the roughly equal territorial split proposed for the Bosnian Serbs

and Bosnia's Muslim-Croat federation with a suggestion that Serbs in Bosnia might form a confederal link with Serbia proper.

But a senior Serb official made clear that his side was still primarily interested in obtaining a more favourable territorial division of Bosnia.

"Maps are perhaps the most important issue and that is being ignored at the moment," said Momcilo Krajisnik, the hardline speaker of the Bosnian Serb Assembly.

Under the contact group peace plan, the Serbs would have to roll back from the 70 per cent of Bosnia they control after 32 months of fighting to a position where they hold 49 per cent. The Muslim-Croat federation would get the rest.

The idea of allowing Serbs in Bosnia to form a confederation with Serbia went down badly with the Muslim-led government in Sarajevo.

Bosnian Vice-President Ejup Ganic said on Sky Television that his government had accepted the peace plan as tabled, while the Serbs led by Radovan Karadzic had rejected it.

"The peace plan is on the table. We accept it. Karadzic's Serbs refuse it. This mission to Belgrade is not clear to us it is just buying more time for Karadzic's Serbs."

"We have never objected to links for Serbs and Serbia but these links should not question our sovereignty and the integrity of our country... I'm afraid that we as the legal government have no au-

thority to participate in that."

Mr. Ganic appeared ready to accept the withdrawal of the U.N. Protection Force, saying it could no longer do its job because it had effectively fallen hostage to the Serbs.

Bosnian Serbs have failed to honour a pledge to release hundreds of peacekeepers being held as "human shields" against NATO air strikes and have renewed a threat to shoot down NATO aircraft over Bosnia.

Both Bosnian factions are in reality wary of what might happen if the peacekeepers withdraw. The Muslims fear an unchecked Serb army and the Serbs are concerned about an unhindered flow of arms to the Muslims.

While Mr. Hurd's threat to pull out the peacekeepers is the most explicit for some time, any such operation is fraught with danger and would probably require the intervention of a large NATO force to shield the withdrawal.

United Nations Secretary-General Boutros Ghali has disclosed that contingency planning with NATO for a possible pull-out of the U.N. force from Bosnia is well under way.

Dr. Ghali said he had been told by Russia, Britain, France, Spain and Canada that they would withdraw their U.N. troops if the Security Council voted to lift an international arms embargo in favour of the Muslim-run Bosnian government.

It had been agreed at a

meeting in Geneva last June with his military commanders in the region to prepare for such an eventuality. "I can tell you that the project is quite advanced and has been agreed with NATO," he added.

Observers in Bosnia generally agree that a withdrawal of the U.N. Protection Force would be a militarily humiliating exercise that would in addition spell the end of the international humanitarian effort.

Meanwhile, the former Turkish army chief of staff said Turkey sent arms to the Muslim-led Bosnian government in violation of an international embargo.

However, "90 per cent" of the arms were seized by Croatia and never reached Bosnia, Gen. Dogu Gures told the Istanbul newspaper Huriyet in an interview published Sunday.

Gen. Gures did not give any other details and it was not clear if the shipments continued. Gen. Gures retired from the Turkish military's top post in August.

It's long been rumoured that Turkey was arming Bosnia's outgunned government. Turkey has historical ties with Bosnian Muslims who overthrew Islam under Ottoman rule in the Balkans.

Gen. Gures was also quoted as saying he believed a Turkish ship was ordered to stop monitoring the international arms embargo in the Adriatic Sea following a similar decision by the United States last month.

Berlusconi questioning faces further delay

ROME (R) — Several thousand demonstrators joined rallies in support of Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi Sunday while Milan magistrates who want to question him for alleged corruption learned they must wait at least another week.

Mr. Berlusconi's spokesman Jas Gawronski confirmed that the prime minister planned to meet prosecutors from Milan's elite "mani pulite" (clean hands) anti-graft team but said Mr. Berlusconi would not be available until Dec. 13.

Centre-left opposition candidates were expected to prosper in mayoral elections Sunday in 49 towns throughout the country after a first round of voting two weeks ago in which Mr. Berlusconi's Forza Italia party took a drubbing.

Mr. Berlusconi's political fate appeared in the balance two days after that electoral defeat when Milan magistrates warned him he was under investigation for alleged corruption.

But he has won some breathing space, uniting his fractious coalition and striking a crucial deal with trade unions on contentious pensions reforms.

Several commentators have said his future is secure until after parliament has passed an austerity budget for next year, a step which it must by law complete by Dec. 31.

Mr. Gawronski said there was no space in Mr. Berlusconi's schedule to meet magistrates in the coming week.

The prime minister has repeated he is ready to speak to magistrates when he has completed forthcoming foreign trips and has said he is available on Dec. 13, 14, 15 or 19, Mr. Gawronski told reporters.

Mr. Berlusconi was formally advised by Milan magistrates on Nov. 22 that he was under investigation over alleged bribes paid by companies in his Fininvest business empire to tax police. He has denied wrongdoing and said he will not resign.

Mr. Gawronski Friday denied Mr. Berlusconi was playing for time and indicated he may be questioned in the middle of the coming week, but the spokesman said that would not now prove possible.

Mr. Berlusconi flies to Budapest later Sunday to attend the CSCE summit on Dec. 5-6.

He may stop off in Zagreb before returning to Rome briefly for a cabinet meeting on Dec. 7.

Rebels in Luanda to discuss accord

LUANDA (R) — Negotiators from the Angolan rebel movement UNITA arrived in the capital Luanda Sunday to discuss implementing the latest peace agreement, state radio said.

The radio said the three-member UNITA team, headed by former UNITA representative in London Isias Samakhuva, arrived in Luanda on a U.N. aircraft.

It identified the other

members as Brigadier Chassinha and Lieutenant-Colonel Castilho.

They are due to take part in a meeting of a new Joint Political and Military Commission, set up by the government and UNITA to oversee implementation of the peace pact signed in the Zambian capital Lusaka on Nov. 20.

Mr. Samakhuva told the radio: "Our presence here will surely be the greatest

signal we can give of our commitment to the peace process."

The delegation was originally expected in Luanda at the start of last week.

"The situation around the country is still a bit tense despite the accords already signed and we can't bring together all the members of the delegation... that is the only reason for our delay," said Mr. Samakhuva.

Manhunt starts after 3 slain in Sweden

STOCKHOLM (R) — Three people were killed and up to 20 injured in a gun attack on one of Stockholm's most fashionable nightclubs Sunday, police said.

Three men who sprayed the nightclub with automatic gunfire shortly after 5.00 a.m. (0400 GMT) had probably been refused entrance earlier, they added.

"We think that there were three attackers who had been turned away from the door earlier in the night and came back later," Tommy Karlholm of the Stockholm Police told Reuters.

Witnesses from the Sture Compagniet Club said they could identify one of the attackers and armed police went to an address in the city's southern suburbs during the morning.

"We have got details identifying one person... We don't know for sure if this man really is one of the attackers," a Stockholm Police spokesman told the Swedish News Agency (TT).

Guests and doormen described how they had seen one man shooting around a grand flight of steps at the club entrance.

Billy Linder, aged 30, said he was standing outside "the Sture" and chatting to a friend at around five o'clock.

"The guy shot straight into the lobby. He was just spraying bullets and not saying anything. It lasted for maybe 45 seconds. He was blonde and had short hair."

Police said two men were killed at the nightclub and restaurant complex, popular among the young, fashion-

able set, in Stockholm's wealthy Ostermalm area.

A third victim, a young woman shot in the head, was dead on arrival at hospital.

Ambulances, passers by and taxis that rushed to the scene described the doorway and steps of the club as littered with injured and shock people.

Eyewitness Kurt, 23, said: "I saw the man turn up. He was holding the automatic weapon at his hip and shot wildly in among people."

Eli, 29, a former Israeli soldier on holiday in Sweden, said he was standing about two metres from the gunman.

"I ran as soon as I heard shots. I recognised the sound because I have experience of it, but most people stood still without taking cover when he fired a second salvo."



Their Kalashnikovs resting on a radiator and in the presidential palace in Grozny (AFP photo) jackets spread as prayer rugs, Chechens pray

Leaders gather for European security summit

BUDAPEST (R) — Faced with chaos in Bosnia, leaders from across Europe gather Sunday for a security summit aimed at preventing more Yugoslav-style conflicts on a divided and increasingly troubled continent.

U.S. President Bill Clinton, Russian President Boris Yeltsin and some 50 European leaders are supposed to draw up a blueprint for security at the meeting which starts Monday.

But divisions over how to end the bloodshed in Bosnia and Russia's problems in dealing with the conflicts of the post-cold war world threaten to disrupt the two-day summit of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE).

Mr. Yeltsin, uneasy about NATO's plans to take in some Eastern European states and worried that Russia could be isolated, was due to arrive later Sunday with most other European leaders.

Mr. Clinton will fly in Monday and stay just a few hours.

The summit will adopt a weighty document called "Towards a genuine partnership in a new era," committing all to reducing tensions and respecting minorities and human rights, while laying out plans for the prevention of crisis and future arms control.

"We are determined to give a new political impetus to the CSCE, thus enabling it to play an essential role in meeting the challenges of the 21st century," says the document, a draft of which was obtained by Reuters.

But the ideals of providing equal security for all and preventing new aggression have been shattered by the failure to end the war in Bosnia and the return of conflict to other areas of the continent, particularly the former Soviet Union.

The CSCE, widely criticised as an unwieldy talking shop since it can take action only if all parties agree, may decide at the summit to send a multinational peacekeeping force to police a ceasefire in the troubled enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh.

In addition, Ukraine will formally renounce nuclear weapons at the conference, bringing a long-running dispute over the fate of the former Soviet atomic arsenal to an end and paving the way for delayed implementation of superpower arms cuts.

But it is the wrangling over Bosnia which is likely to dominate. Major in the five-nation "contact group" trying to broker peace may meet here after talks in Serbia.

Bosnia and Croatia, who hope for a meeting with the contact group in Budapest, are angry at the United Nations and NATO for failing to defend the Bihac enclave from Serb assaults. The rump Yugoslav state, suspended from the CSCE, is not present.

Russia, already uneasy over previous NATO air strikes in Bosnia, has vetoed a U.N. plan to make sure fuel does not get through to the Bosnian Serbs and is also struggling with the rebellious region of Chechenya and other conflicts.

Knowing it has little

chance of joining NATO and fearing isolation, Russia has proposed beefing up the CSCE and turning it into the dominant European security organisation — thus giving Moscow a major say in all decisions.

But Western allies, although anxious to reassure Russia as they prepare to take Eastern European nations into NATO, have blocked those proposals and the summit is likely to approve only a modest strengthening of the CSCE's role.

Moscow also wants the summit to give it a mandate for peacekeeping in areas such as Georgia and Tajikistan but does not want the meeting to discuss the growing crisis in Chechenya, which is considered an internal affair.

Other countries are insisting that Russia accepts international monitoring and checks on peacekeeping missions.

"It is not in the West's interest to leave Russia to itself when it comes to conflicts in the former Soviet Union," said German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel last week.

Russia could block the proposal to send a 3,000-strong multinational peacekeeping force to Nagorno-Karabakh, because it is wary of other countries' involvement and CSCE monitoring.

If the force is approved, it would mark the first CSCE military operation and boost its flagging credibility.

Born out of a 1975 Helsinki conference, the CSCE is

largely a forum for discussion on human rights and the protection of minorities and borders. It has also sent small missions to help relieve tension in some regions.

CSCE officials complain that its conflict prevention role is not appreciated and that its value lies in linking every European state with that of the United States and Canada — unlike the more exclusive Western clubs of NATO and the European Union.

Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma is scheduled to sign the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) during the summit in Budapest in return for what diplomats say are strictly limited assurances to protect Ukraine from aggression.

Russia, the United States, France and Britain — four of the world's five declared nuclear powers — are expected to give the assurances in a security memorandum for Ukraine.

When the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991 four republics inherited its nuclear arsenal on their territories.

Ukraine has accepted in principle it should become a non-nuclear state but has held out for security and economic guarantees, delaying implementation of major arms cuts agreed by Washington and Moscow before the Soviet collapse.

Monday's signing ceremonies on the fringe of the CSCE effectively clear up nuclear problems surrounding the successor states to Soviet Union and allow the START-I treaty to be implemented three years after it was agreed.

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Future is at hand

JAFFE CENTRE for Strategic Studies in Tel Aviv has come out in favour of negotiating the future of Jerusalem now instead of delaying the determination of its final status till the last stage in the Israeli-Palestinian peace talks. This is not surprising since the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs is also suggesting accelerating the pace of the negotiations with the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) over the future status of the West Bank and Gaza Strip instead of keeping them in a state of limbo till the third year of peace parleys. The once valid rationale behind putting off the determination of the final status of these areas has all but disappeared in the wake of the realisation that negotiations over the intermediate issues can no longer make sense in isolation from the awareness of their final outcome. We think that this trend to move up the consideration of the future status of both Jerusalem and the other occupied Palestinian territories on the Israeli-Palestinian agenda makes sense. What does not make sense at all, though, is the proposition advanced also by the Jaffe think tank that calls for the annexation of no less than 10 per cent of the West Bank as part of the final settlement.

Obsession with security considerations appears to be behind this reasoning for the retention of a significant chunk of Palestinian lands. Israel, it seems, still contemplates the deployment of a "rapid intervention force" on Palestinian lands to check any "invasion from the east," presumably across the Jordan River. This Israeli anxiety may have made some sense before the conclusion of the peace treaty with Jordan, but not now. It follows that the absence of a real military threat from this side should deprive Israel of any legitimate pretext to hold on to Palestinian lands in the West Bank for security reasons. Border rectification that goes both ways is something, but annexation of Arab territories is something that cannot be condoned or defended. With the removal of any designs on Arab lands from the Israeli agenda, it should become conceivable for both sides to start discussions on the future of Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including of course East Jerusalem, as quickly as possible. There is nothing more pragmatic than dealing head-on with the core issues in the light of their final shape and form.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

A WRITER in Al Rai daily Sunday described cutting telephone services, by the Telecommunications Corporation (TCC), to homes of 18,000 subscribers in the Amman region Saturday as a crime. The suspension of the very essential service came at a time when the country was facing a cold front and very severe weather conditions and when people were in most need of telephone to call in emergencies or to order fuel and other purposes, said Jihad Momani. By suspending telephone services to homes, the TCC has deprived people in distress of calling in the Civil Defence to save people cut off by floods or facing danger at home and forced hundreds of citizens to go out in the cold and queue for hours to pay their bills, said the writer. Indeed, some of the roads in the western districts of Amman were blocked, making it impossible for subscribers living there from reaching the TCC centres under the difficult weather conditions, he added. The writer said that the TCC did not give subscribers sufficient time to go to the bank and obtain the required sums for the bills or to submit a request to the TCC to reexamine the bills, many of which contained incorrect figures.

A COLUMNIST in Al Dustour attacked Russia for what he called its open war on the Muslim nations. Saleh Qallab said that the Russians are attacking the Muslim Chechens close to their border and helping the Serbs to attack the Muslim Bosnians. While Moscow's war on the Chechens is considered part of the tendency to revive the Russian empire, the hostile attitude against the Bosnians is motivated by ethnic and religious considerations, said the writer. It was thought that with the downfall of the Soviet Union and communism, democracy and respect of other nations' independence would be ensured, but it turned out that the Russians are now trying to revive their old empire and regain their past glory at the expense of other nations, said the writer.

HUMAN RIGHTS FILE

By Dr. Waleed M. Sa'adi

Freedom of the press is a measure of democracy

IN PRACTICALLY all democratic nations of the world, chief editors and reporters of newspapers and other publications are deemed "holy cows" that cannot be touched, kicked around or arrested on flimsy accusations or suspicions. This is the sacred law of the democratic club of which we are proud members.

The norm in the democratic world is to confine the "prosecution" of the members of the press to the absolute minimum situations when criminal intent is clear and loud and national security is in fact threatened. The rule of the thumb in this context is to show that the responsible editor or reporter has not only published wrong information but has knowingly done so in fact or in law. Otherwise, the standard on which other free and democratic countries operate calls for instituting civil cases against any member of the press for publishing false information that cause measurable damage to the complainant.

We in Jordan still go around jumping the gun by taking criminal action against members of the press even when national security is not at stake. A case in point was the arrest of the chief editor of Al Rasid tabloid for publishing false information about the professional conduct of a certain physician by alleging, falsely as it turned out to be, that the operation he had conducted on a patient led to his paralysis. Allegations about professional negligence are widespread in many parts of the world but there is no precedent that I know of that led to criminal prosecution of the reporter or the editor of the publication that reported the news. This is where we seem to be on a different wavelength from other nations of the world and this is where we have to correct our ways and make them harmonious with the relevant international standard.

There is a clear human rights issue here because freedom of the press is one of the most cherished element of human rights and among the most enshrined. There is obviously a strong case for nurturing responsible and accurate journalism, but there are ways other than precipitous criminal prosecution against members of the press that knowingly or unknowingly published a false piece of information. If the subject matter is of no concern to state security and does not appear to jeopardise public order, then it would be better to leave the adjudication of all disputes arising therefrom to civil courts. If there is a report about a certain malpractice, there is every reason to encourage public

knowledge about it, provided the reporting is done fairly and squarely by giving each party its due and letting the reader decide.

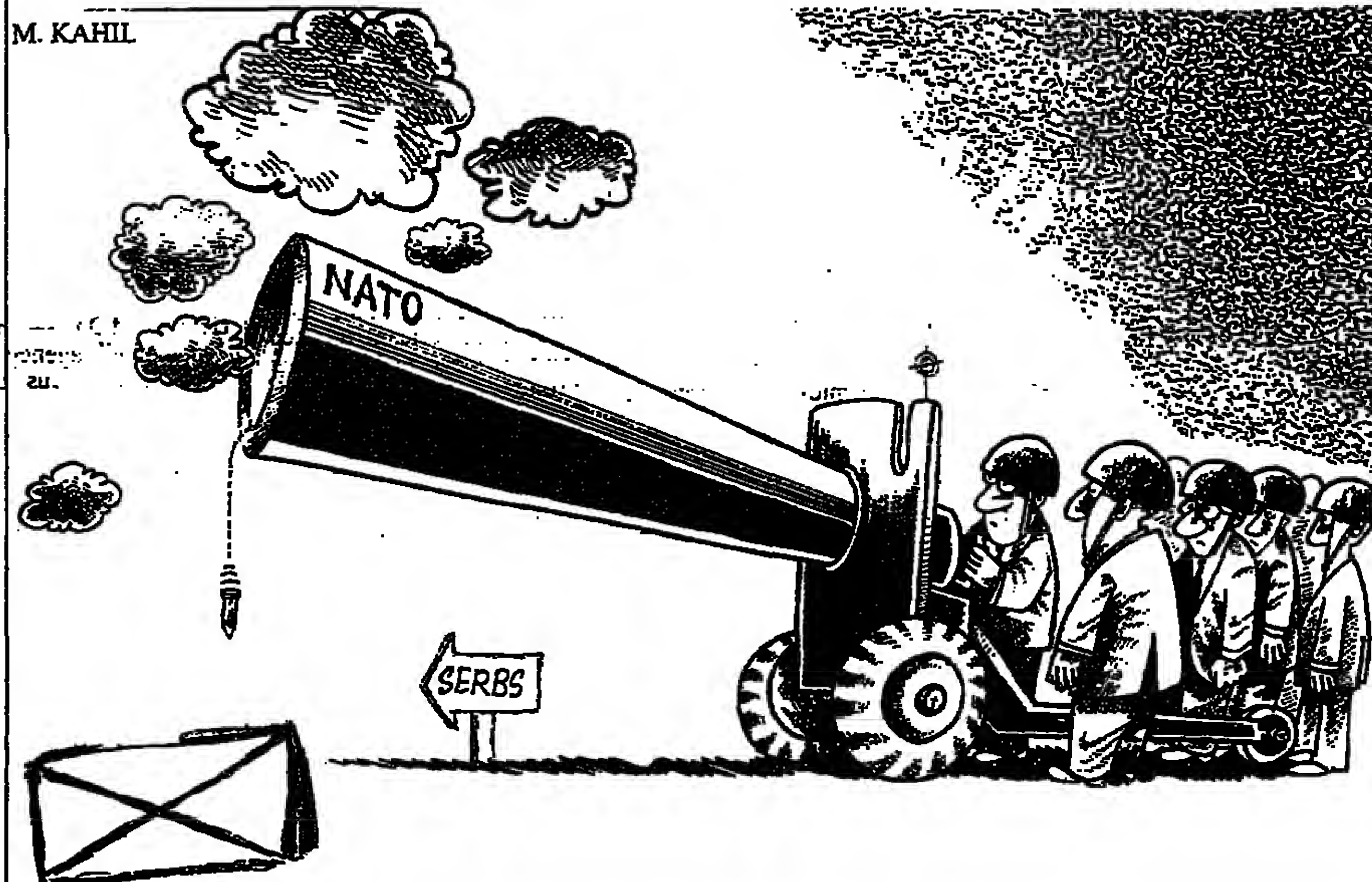
We in Jordan have suffered a great deal from lack of dissemination of information about professional malpractices in various fields. Many professional ill-doings go on unreported and at the other end our people suffer and end up paying the price.

The level of professionalism cannot be expected to improve unless every case of malpractice reaches the public in a professional way. Our doctors, engineers and other professionals are certainly not infallible. Yet we hardly hear or learn about the untold sufferings or even deaths that result from such malpractices.

As far as I can tell, unlike more advanced nations, we still do not have the culture to expose threats to life and limb. That is why so many tragedies in medicine or otherwise go on undetected and are swept under the carpet. The biggest casualty in this case could be the quality of professional services in addition to the cost to Jordanians in terms of their lives and well-being.

In retrospect, our authorities should refrain from impeding the free and responsible flow of information about local issues by lodging criminal proceedings against journalists when the cumulative effect of such actions could inhibit public knowledge about matters that touch them most directly. When, for example, a certain researcher at the University of Jordan discovers during her research that there is simply too much DDT found in Jordanian mothers' milk, criminal prosecution should be directed against those responsible for this dismal state of affairs and not those who expose the danger. Similarly, when there are persistent medical reports that cancer cases in the country are on the rise, the public prosecutor should think in terms of bringing those responsible to justice instead of seeking the "informers" for possible criminal prosecution. And why not bring criminal charges for a change against farmers who still use pesticides and insecticides in a criminal way on vegetables and fruits that end up on our dining table. This is not to suggest that press people are untouchable and are immune from all legal prosecution. Rather, it is a plea for an equally responsible criminal prosecution policy across the board.

M. KAHIL



Unchecked aggression in Europe endangers the West

By Anthony Lewis

BOSTON — If the leaders of the western alliance want to understand the challenge the West faces after the cold war — one they show no signs of having understood so far — they should meet Dr. Esma Zecevic.

Dr. Zecevic is chief pediatrician at Kosevo Hospital in Sarajevo. In a column last month I described how she worked under appalling conditions — and how she was herself gravely wounded by a sniper's bullet that pierced her lung.

Friends got her out of Sarajevo and flew her to Boston to have the bullet removed. Surgeons found it resting on her aorta, the great artery from the heart; another fraction of an inch and she would have died.

When I saw her last week, she said she felt fine now. Would she stay here for a while to rest and recover from the tensions of life under Serbian attack? No, she said, her place was in Sarajevo. She began her journey home last week.

To meet Dr. Zecevic is to understand how the Bosnian war menaces western values. Here is a 54-year-old woman, western in outlook, a committed doctor, whom Serbian aggressors want to kill because of her religion.

She is a Muslim — not someone who wants a Muslim state, but one who precisely cherishes Bosnia because it has been a mixture of cultures and religions. Her family happens to be Muslim;

for that she and others like her must be killed or removed so that Bosnian Serbs can have a pure Serbian state.

That is the challenge to the western alliance. Forty years ago the countries of Western Europe, the United States and Canada, having fought the racist savagery of Nazism, joined in the North Atlantic Treaty to preserve humane values from Soviet communism. Now they face this new menace, this new savagery in the name of religious nationalism.

"Forty years ago the countries of Western Europe, the United States and Canada, having fought the racist savagery of Nazism, joined in the North Atlantic Treaty to preserve humane values from Soviet communism. Now they face this new menace, this new savagery in the name of religious nationalism."

Leslie H. Gelb, president of the Council of Foreign Relations, defines the challenge in the current issue of Foreign Affairs. It is an "all-corrosive danger," he writes — "the teacup was filled with countless bodies and horrors, the scourge of civil and ethnic violence."

The piece warns that we in the West may underestimate the change in the world since the cold war ended. We may go on worrying about the old problems that haunted us —

Russia, Germany, nuclear weapons and neglected war.

Mr. Gelb calls the new core problem, "wars of national debilitation."

"If we fail to ameliorate and check this scourge," he writes, "both the victims and the unpunished killers will undo much of what we value, and undermine efforts to mold a just and stable international order."

And damage will be not just abroad but at home: "The failure to deal adequately with such strife, to do something about mass murder and

civilians. But U.N. commanders have accepted Serbian rules of engagement, worked with the Serbian besiegers and siphoned off relief supplies to Serbian forces.

NATO has many aircraft ready to attack Serbian forces for their frequent violations of declared safe areas, but the U.N. command regularly refuses to approve strikes.

And NATO itself is deeply divided, Britain and France resisting any forceful action on behalf of the victims because the Serbs might then attack their troops on the ground.

The weakness and folly of the western position have been humiliatingly illustrated in recent days. Bosnian Serbs have shot missiles at the Sarajevo building that houses the Bosnian presidency. Planes from the adjoining Krajina area of Croatia, held by Serbs, have violated the no-fly rule to drop cluster bombs and napalm on the Bosnian safe area of Bihać.

NATO and the United Nations responded with mere words until last week's air strike against the offending airfield in Krajina. Words risk nothing, because the Serbian aggressors pay no attention to them.

Unchecked aggression in Europe does not just menace Dr. Esma Zecevic and the innocent people of Bosnia. It menaces belief in the western alliance. If that goes, the Visigoths of nationalist frenzy and ethnic hatred will indeed be at the gates.

The New York Times.

LETTERS

'We deserve equal rights'

To the Editor:

I am writing to thank the Jordan Times for the enlightening and long overdue article "Sexual harassment of women in public — time to speak out" (Tuesday, Nov. 22).

It is indeed time to speak out against the increasing acts of shameful disrespect shown towards women in public. I feel it is necessary to speak about many of the disturbing experiences I have either suffered, witnessed or have detailed knowledge of from reliable sources. I feel the need to do this for the benefit of other women who have undergone similar hardships and in order to educate those countless others who are somewhat naive about the extent of sexual harassment which actually occurs in our society. Or those who prefer to pretend it does not exist, in the hope such indecent behaviour will disappear if ignored, when nothing could be further from the truth.

I am a third-year student at the University of Jordan. During the time I have spent studying there, I have personally experienced rude, impertinent and insulting behaviour at the hands of male students, simply because I am a female. I can relate to all the upsetting incidents the female students interviewed in your article complained of. And so can many of my girlfriends and acquaintances. Certainly, I can attest to the fact that the majority of male students are extremely childish, immature to the point of being pathetic and, sadly, lacking in basic manners. They spend most of their time commenting on the attire and personal appearance of female students in silly ways that are embarrassingly obvious. I genuinely seem as if they are desperate for anything relating to a female to comment on impolitely and make fun of.

A close friend of mine, who previously wore a long dress and headscarf, has recently taken to covering her face and hands in addition. She confided she felt obliged to do so because of all the rude stares female students are continually subjected to by male students on the bus.

Another friend arrived early for an exam one day and sent down to review her subject in a secluded veranda in the department, which is normally only frequented by girls. The area was deserted that day and the bench she sat on happened to be in front of a window leading to a corridor in the building. There was no one around when she sat down, and she was so engrossed in her work that it wasn't until she got up to leave a while later that she noticed a male student had sat himself quietly down on the window sill behind her and had apparently been rudely staring at her for some time. She hurried away, feeling greatly embarrassed, as if her privacy had been violated. Most of all, she could understand what she had done to attract such unwelcome attention. She told me this wasn't the first incident she had suffered and seriously wondered if it was time she took to wearing a headscarf for her own protection.

Unfortunately, even girls who wear scarves are not immune to the offensive behaviour of disrespectful male students. Three scarved friends of mine suffered a most disturbing incident not long ago. One of the three female students was stalked on campus by a weird male student who had apparently become obsessed with her. The only connection between them was the one class lecture they shared. She had never even looked his way, let alone spoken to him. She rebuffed his attempts to speak to her flirtatiously. Certainly, she had never encouraged him in any way. But he, like most male students, needed no encouragement for his inexcusable behaviour. When her friends aided her in telling him to get lost, he sought revenge on these girls. He gathered a group of male friends and had them follow the girls and start pointing, laughing and making insulting remarks to them in public — just loud enough for them to hear. This indecent and humiliatingly hurtful behaviour only ceased when the girls took courage in their hands and went to complain to the dean of the faculty about the youth who had started it all. (It was only fortunate the girls had all taken a class with the boy and had therefore known his name; otherwise they would have never been able to make the necessary complaint.) One of my acquaintances has taken to wearing a long dress and headscarf because she is heartily sick and weary of the impertinent and highly personal comments female students are rudely subjected to make students on a fairly regular basis.

I, myself, have experienced disturbing incidents of being stared at by male students in class and on campus. There have been attempts to brush against me deliberately. And I have been subjected to offensive comments. Jeering, leering, pointing, laughing, singing and clapping are also on the agenda from time to time.

Obviously, a lot more harassment and bad behaviour towards women goes on than most people are aware of, whether in the workplace, the university or the street. I could go on giving many such examples. After all it has to be said because, unfortunately, many are naive about the extent of sexual harassment against women in our society. I, myself, would have thought many of the incidents exaggerated, had I not witnessed them myself.

The most important thing to realise is the extent of indecent assaults, whether verbal or physical, on females in general, and on female students and working women in particular who, as you pointed out in your article are particularly vulnerable to such attacks.

My friends and I have spent a lot of time pondering on the reasons male students, or at least the majority of them, behave particularly badly towards female students. We have failed to come up with satisfactory answers. (Though there have been reported incidents of offensive behaviour by professors, most aggressive and indecent acts are committed by male students against female students.)

It is only an excuse to claim that a lot of males behave in such a sickening fashion because they haven't had any chance to interact with females. The truth is males have plenty of interaction with females through sisters, cousins, daughters of family friends and their own mothers. Most of those males just do not want to treat females as equals because they have no respect for them.

Certainly, there is no justification for such vile behaviour. Every male student who is engaged or have certain female relatives with them in class still look at most female students as if they had come from another planet. It is quite clear that these young men have no respect for themselves, for their sisters or mothers. Concepts are set in early childhood at home. Children should be raised equally from the start of their development and growth.

Female students are continually upset, embarrassed and hurt by such actions. But most of all, they do not understand the reasons behind such behaviour which is always unprovoked and uncalled for.

Of course, there are some girls who are also silly or show bad behaviour, but to be just, these girls are a minority. Most female students are polite, decent girls who never encourage such humiliating behaviour by word, gesture or even appearance. Most of them are afraid to reveal their experience, because they are unhappy aware we still live in a society that usually blames women for the mistakes of men. Women are usually condemned and told it is their own fault, when nothing could be further from the truth.

The saddest thing is most people still do not realise these male students do not need any encouragement in order to feel they can harass female students. One doesn't have to be immediately dressed or good-looking or even behaving in a suggestive manner in order to be harassed. In most cases, one needs only be female! There is a thin but clear line between friendly interaction and sexual harassment, and these students know when they cross it. The awful reality is they just do not care.

It is time to draw attention to the indecent behaviour a lot of men and boys are getting away with. Covering up serious problems unsuspicious women. Neither does blaming them unfairly on unsuspecting women.

Sexual harassment occurs in every society and it is high time we admitted it occurs in ours. It is time women stood up to men and showed them that they no longer accept rude, insulting or unfair treatment simply because they are females. We are human beings created by God with equal rights and we deserve to be treated as such. We deserve respect.

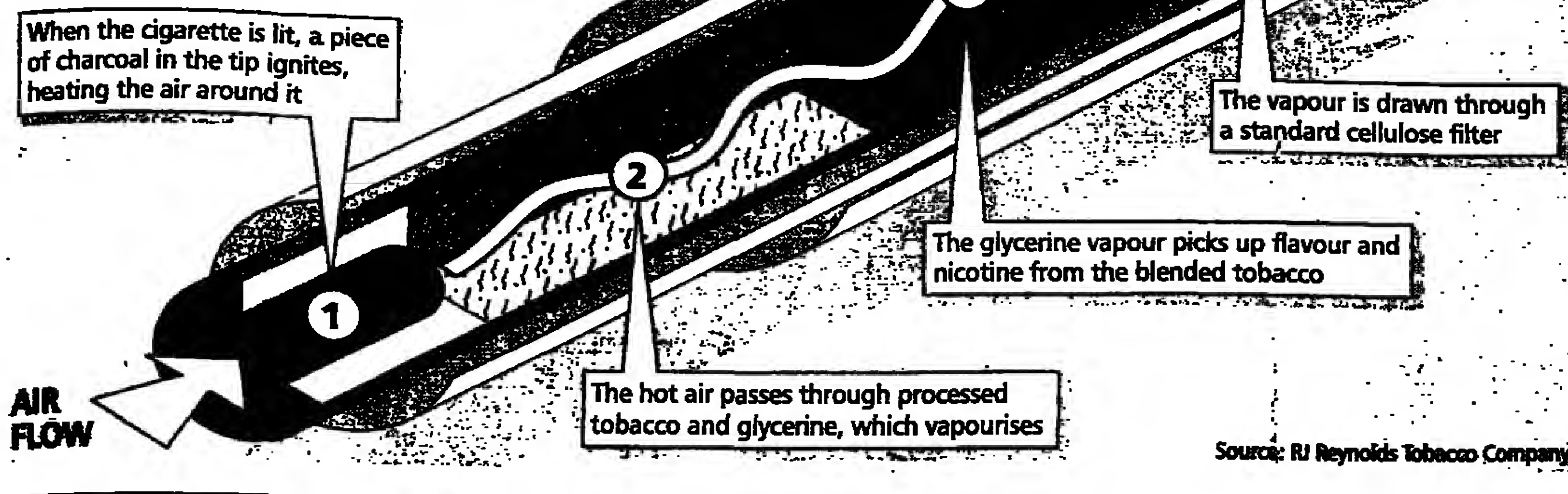
Alia Mustafa,
P.O. Box 89,
Mahesh.

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Features

HOW THE NEW CIGARETTE WORKS

Smokers who have tested the new cigarette, which will be marketed under the brand name Eclipse, say its taste is similar to a standard cigarette, but that it is harder to draw on and harder to light.



'Healthy' drag keeps nicotine hot on draw

By Peter Pringle

THE UNITED States tobacco industry, faced with increasingly hostile attacks from anti-smoking groups, is about to launch a "reduced risk" cigarette of the kind which failed miserably six years ago because smokers did not like its flavour.

The new cigarette eliminates most of the cancer-causing tars, has almost no smoke or ash and the inoffensive odour of burning weeds, according to the RJ Reynolds company which will market the new cigarette next year.

Even so, the cigarette is likely to attract severe criticism from anti-smokers because it contains as much nicotine as regular cigarettes, and will be equally addictive. And if the U.S. government ever succeeds in declaring nicotine as addictive a drug as cocaine or heroin, then all cigarettes, including the new one, would be regulated and the nicotine content greatly reduced.

RJ Reynolds, America's second largest tobacco company with 30 per cent of the U.S. cigarette market, has christened the brand Eclipse, hoping it will shut out the competition, especially from the nation's largest tobacco company, Philip Morris, which has 42 per cent of the \$50bn trade and will soon be launching its own "safer" cigarette.

The difference in the new brand is at the lighted end. The first half-inch of the cigarette is a piece of charcoal wrapped in a fibreglass insulator. Once alight, the charcoal burns at 900°C — about the same as the flame on a regular cigarette — but because it is enclosed in the insulator it does not ignite the tobacco.

Instead, as the smoker draws in air, the charcoal superheats the air which passes over the tobacco in the cigarette, carrying the flavour and the nicotine. The air passes through a filter in the normal way. But there is little if any smoke and the cigarette does not burn down

at all. It is the same size as the end of the smoke as it was at the beginning.

RJ Reynolds claims that 95 per cent of secondhand smoke found in ordinary cigarettes is eliminated. In the last two years, 700 U.S. cities and counties have introduced smoking bans in the workplace and in restaurants because of the dangers of second-hand smoke.

The tobacco company claims that the cancer-causing tars present in other cigarettes are reduced by 90 per cent. As yet, however, the company is not making any detailed health claims because it does not have sufficient evidence to back them up. "We cannot call this a safer cigarette," an RJ Reynolds spokesman told the *New York Times*. "We are concentrating on describing it as a product with fewer active compounds."

In 1988, RJ Reynolds introduced another so-called "safer cigarette" under the brand name Premier, but smokers rejected it. In the 1970s, the British-American

Tobacco Company test-marketed a cigarette in Britain called Planet, that was made of tobacco substitute. It was never put on sale.

The Eclipse brand has been tested by RJ Reynolds for more than a year and, according to the company, has scored highly among smokers, their non-smoking spouses and family members. The company claims more than 80 per cent of both groups say Eclipse is a breakthrough.

However, a spokesman for the Food and Drug Administration which regulates drugs has not yet reviewed the data. And one of the key anti-smoking politicians in the U.S. Congress, Henry Waxman of California, said the new cigarette "may have the advantage of being safer, relatively speaking, but it still delivers nicotine."

In the Republican turnover in the mid-term elections, Mr. Waxman lost his chairmanship of the House of Representatives subcommittee on health and the

environment that has been in the forefront of attacks on the tobacco companies. It held intrusive hearings into the companies' secret research on the dangers of smoking. Now, with the Republicans in charge, there will be no more hearings and fewer embarrassments for the tobacco industry.

But several class action suits continue. Two states, Mississippi and Florida, are suing the tobacco companies for medical expenses the states have paid out to victims of smoking disorders. There are a number of outstanding suits against the tobacco companies, alleging that they knowingly misrepresented the dangers of tobacco and the addictiveness of nicotine.

The industry acknowledges an uphill struggle in keeping sales buoyant at home. But abroad, American tobacco companies are making great inroads into the Russian, Chinese and south-east Asian markets.

The Independent

The CSCE — what it is and how it works

BUDAPEST (R) — Leaders of the 33-nation Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) meet in Budapest on Monday for a two-day summit. Here is a brief account of the CSCE's history, objectives and role:

Created in the early 1970s as a forum for East-West dialogue, the CSCE includes all European states, the United States and Canada — stretching from Vancouver to Vladivostok and covering much of the northern hemisphere.

It started with 35 members but the collapse of the Soviet Union swelled its ranks. It now includes 53 nations, although the membership of the rump Yugoslav state has been suspended.

The CSCE, which has no military structure or armed forces of its own, works to ease tensions and help prevent conflicts.

It can act only if all members agree and this principle of consensus has brought charges that it is unwieldy and ineffective. But it is the only security body to include all states in Europe and link them with North America.

A 1975 Helsinki summit agreed guidelines for the be-

haviour of governments, covering security issues, human rights and the principle that borders should not be changed by force.

Western governments claimed the conference was important because the Soviet-led bloc had signed human rights commitments, while communist states felt their legitimacy and borders had been confirmed.

The Helsinki agreements remained little more than paper accords until the collapse of the Berlin Wall in 1989.

A CSCE summit in Paris in 1990 unveiled a "charter for a new Europe," declaring that the organisation could now truly play a role in fostering justice, peace and prosperity now that the continent's old divisions had gone.

The Paris summit gave the CSCE an organisational structure for the first time, including a conflict prevention centre in Vienna, an office to monitor elections in Warsaw and a permanent secretariat in Prague.

The CSCE became more involved in arms control, striving to build agreements on military openness to build confidence.

Another summit in 1992, again in Helsinki, called for the CSCE to take a more active role in managing and preventing crises in Europe, including peacekeeping.

Against the backdrop of the war in former Yugoslavia, Europe's military organisations — NATO and the Western European Union (WEU) — said they were ready to take on peacekeeping missions if the CSCE gave them a mandate.

So far, this has not happened. Instead, the United Nations has taken the lead in crises such as Bosnia.

The CSCE also has a secretary-general and a high commissioner for national minorities. A committee of officials meets every week in Vienna to discuss key issues. Summits are held every two years. Foreign ministers meet annually.

The CSCE has helped coordinate the enforcement of U.N. sanctions against the rump Yugoslav state and sent small missions to help ease tensions in the Baltic republics, Tajikistan, Georgia, Moldova, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Ukraine.

New sea disasters increase pressure on safety talks

By Clelia Oziel
Reuters

LONDON — Recent maritime disasters, including one in Manila Bay on Friday, have intensified pressure on officials at London talks next week to set new standards of safety on the high seas.

The regular meeting of a safety committee of the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) — a U.N. "watchdog" agency — was planned to focus on ferry safety after more than 900 people died when the ferry Estonia sank in the Baltic Sea in September.

A blaze aboard the Italian cruise ship Achille Lauro in the Indian Ocean this week and a ferry sinking after a collision in Manila Bay on Friday lent fresh urgency to the talks.

"We cannot simply refer to what has been done during the last few years and claim that there is no need for further action," IMO Secretary-General William O'Neill said this week.

The IMO Marine Safety Committee (MSC) will consider at a session which will last until next Friday an O'Neill proposal to form a panel of experts to examine safety on roll-on roll-off ferries like the Estonia.

Mr. O'Neill now calls for attention to issues like the strength of openings to vehi-

cle decks, particularly bow doors like those that may have been ripped off in heavy seas on the Estonia.

The panel would also consider measures to improve a ferry's ability to stay upright if water does get onto the vast car deck, such as costly bulkheads.

IMO spokesman Roger Kohn said it would be too early to examine the Achille Lauro case in detail and the same can be expected to apply to the Cebu City, lost in Manila Bay.

"Nobody will know what exactly happened," he said of the Achille Lauro. "But the ship was built and maintained according to IMO standards."

Concern over ro-ro safety is not new. Standards were raised in 1988 after Britain's Herald of Free Enterprise capsized in 1987, killing 193 people, when a bow door was left open.

An original Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) convention was adopted in 1914 after Britain called an international conference on the loss of the Titanic. Called "unsinkable," it struck an Atlantic iceberg and sank with the loss of 1,500 lives.

The latest version of the convention dates to 1974 with a series of later amendments. It could now see major revisions.

Top naval architects who met in London last week urged the IMO to revise safety standards.

The IMO panel could begin work immediately after obtaining approval at next week's session and present proposals on improvements in ferry safety by May next year, the IMO said.

Recommendations could be issued for immediate application by IMO's 150 member states and further measures could be initiated to amend international treaties.

The London talks will also review reports on human error that industry sources say accounts for 60 per cent of sea tragedies.

It will consider amendments to a 1978 international convention of standards for training, certification and watchkeeping for seafarers which is regarded out of date.

A revised text is expected to enter into force in 1997. IMO has also emphasised the need for further action for the safety of bulk cargo carriers, some of which it said were lost without trace with no time to send out distress messages.

Last year it granted a consultative status to the International Association of Dry Cargo Shipowners (InterCargo), which proposed measures to reduce bulk carrier losses.

Italy's loan sharks exact stiff retribution

By Melanie Goodfellow
Reuters

ROME — They may not bounce your cheques but Italy's loan sharks have far more sinister methods of exacting payment — from rape and assault to destroying your life.

Known as "strozzi", literally stranglers, the illegal moneylenders charge interest of up to 500 per cent and, according to some estimates, rake in more than \$10 billion a year.

Last year, victims' groups say, they managed to ensnare more than two million Italians in a vicious circle of debt.

The Italian media is saturated with the harrowing accounts of those who failed to pay up on time — suicides and ruin.

Last month, one victim, shrouded in shadow to disguise her identity, told television viewers how she was abducted, raped and warned that the same thing would happen to her daughter if she did not repay her debts within 24 hours.

The woman's case is now the subject of a criminal inquiry.

She once owned three shops — two of which she was forced to sell — and

began by borrowing 10 million lire (\$6,200).

"The 10 million became 54 million (\$36,000)," she said.

The majority of those who fall into the clutches of the moneylenders are small businesses struggling to pay off debts as Italy comes out of its worst recession in 50 years.

According to one survey, compiled by the Confindustria Traders' Association, one in three people running small businesses had considered borrowing from loan sharks.

They usually start out borrowing a fairly modest amount of about 15 million lire (\$9,500) but this can increase as much as five-fold as lending rates are progressively bumped up.

"Usury is a tradition in Italy," said Lino Busa, who runs a confidential helpline for the victims of usury for confederate, an organisation for small businesses.

One woman arrested on suspicion of usury in Sicily, 70-year-old Giuseppina Cipollina, had 800 million lire (\$500,000) stuffed under her mattress when police searched her home in October.

"I'm sure I did nothing wrong. I really think I helped a lot of people who needed money," Ms. Cipollina told

reporters.

The traditional figure of the neighbourhood usurer is fast dying out.

"Over the past few years the business has been infiltrated by organised crime groups. For them, usury is primarily a means of laundering the proceeds from other illegal activities," said Mr. Busa.

Sergio Bille, Confindustria's expert on organised crime, estimated that 60 per cent of usury was run by organised crime and a fast way for gangsters to take over legitimate businesses when borrowers could not repay their debts.

"In 1992, organised criminals were able to take control of hundreds upon hundreds of bars, restaurants and shops through usury," he said. "They often leave the original owners in place as front men."

Consumer association Adusbe estimated that usury had a turnover of some 15 trillion lire (\$9.5 billion) in 1993.

Many usury victims blame the banks, which they say force them to turn to loan sharks because of their reluctance to lend to small concerns.

"Banks aren't interested in arranging small loans. They

prefer those in the 500 million (\$350,000) league which involve the same amount of work but yield a lot more," said Luciano Violante, a former chairman of Italy's Anti-Mafia Commission.

Mr. Violante, a parliamentarian for the opposition Democratic Party of the left, told an anti-usury conference in Turin: "If banks paid more time to the small creditors the phenomenon of usury would be halved."

Italian banks have also had their fingers burnt by the recent recession.

"People who go to usurers are generally those who do

not have their accounts in order," the Association of Italian Banks said in a report. "Banks should not be blamed for not giving financial help to those who do not deserve credit."

The government, increasingly concerned by usury and a spate of usury-related suicides and acts of violence, is trying to pass an anti-usury law.

A draft law which would fix a top interest rate and set a penalty of up to five years in jail for anyone found guilty of illegal money lending was approved by the cabinet in September and now has to be passed by parliament.

Nation of tea-drinkers needs to drink more

By Maggie Fox
Reuters

LONDON — Illyd Lewis sniffs his tea suspiciously before taking a sip of the pale, weak brew.

"Ha," he gasps. "We are living up to our reputation of brewing the worst cup of tea in Britain."

As spokesman for the Tea Council, which promotes tea as "Britain's national drink," Mr. Lewis says that not only his own office, but tea shops,

restaurants and hotels must improve the tea on offer to woo Britons back to their favourite brew.

"Soft drinks and alcohol are muscling in on this drinks market. It is a finite market and something has to give," Mr. Lewis said in an interview.

The Tea Council is trying to counter this trend with a new guide to approved tea shops and a newly formed guild of tea shops meant to

encourage high standards.

Despite inroads made by fizzy drinks, Britons still drink far more tea than any other Westerners — an average of 1,355 cups per person a year, compared to 154 in the United States, 642 in Australia and 290 in the Netherlands.

Britons drink about 200 ml drinks a day, excluding water, and more than three of those are cups of tea. Coffee, soft drinks and alcohol account for four.

"We can't really counter the cohesiveness of this world," said Mr. Lewis. But he says tea — and by this he means real tea, not herb or fruit "tisanes" — offers something no other drink does.

"It is a complete occasion if you are taking proper tea. It is how the tea is presented, the options, the china, the ambience," he explained.

"If you take tea out of a lovely cup as opposed to a mug, it's very hard to say it

doesn't taste different."

He sniffs: "Brewing in a mug is one of those things that happens." But most Britons make and drink their tea at home, preferring a "cuppa" they can depend on to the vagaries of the marketplace.

To encourage them to venture out and consume more tea, the Tea Council is inspecting tea shops and classifying them according to service, ambience and, of course, tea quality.

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Sweden clinch 5th Davis Cup

MOSCOW (AFP) — Sweden completed their Davis Cup final victory with a 4-1 scoreline Sunday, after sharing the day's honours with Russia.

The Swedes had sealed already the 1994 title Saturday, when they added the doubles rubber to their two singles wins Friday for an invincible 3-0 lead.

Yevgeny Kafelnikov restored some of Russia's lost pride when he beat Stefan Edberg in Sunday's first dead singles rubber. The talented 20-year-old came back from a set down to win 4-6, 6-4, 6-0.

But Magnus Larsson later added a fourth match victory for the Swedes when he overpowered Alexander Volkov 7-6 (7/4), 6-4.

When Sweden won the Davis Cup for a fifth time retiring captain John Anders Sjogren said he hoped it would inspire Swedish youngsters to start playing tennis again.

Sweden, who dominated world tennis in the Bjorn Borg and Mats Wilander eras and who won the trophy in 1975, 1984, 1985 and 1987, clinched the final when Jonas Bjorkman and Jan Appel won the doubles.

The newly-crowned world doubles champions beat Yevgeny Kafelnikov and Andrei Olhovskiy 6-7, 6-2, 6-3, 1-6, 8-6.

Both of Friday's singles matches had also gone to five sets, with former world number-one Stefan Edberg beating Alexander Volkov 6-4, 6-2, 6-7 (2-7), 0-6, 8-6 after saving a match point, and teammate Magnus Larsson finally defeating Yevgeny Kafelnikov 6-0, 6-2, 3-6, 2-6, 6-3.

"This result is very important for Swedish tennis," said Sjogren. "and I hope young kids will start to play again."

"It's been a team victory and I'm just the captain. We've been lucky to win this match and it's been an unbelievable experience for me."

"The team is a classic Swedish team with spirit and we have got two new members in Jan Appel and Jonas Bjorkman who did a good job. They are hungry for success."

Sjogren, who was chaired



Russia's Yevgeny Kafelnikov

around the court by his excited players after the victory, admitted that luck had played a part in Sweden's victory, and said he never expected the final to be decided in two days. But he claimed that lack of experience had also been a reason for the Russian failure.

"My team played the important points better," he said.

Edberg, 28 and playing his seventh final, said: "This was a great experience, especially how the matches went. It reminds me of our first win against the United States. I hope it won't be my last and that next year will be another good year."

Jan Appel felt saving three break points against him in the fifth game of the final set was the key point in the match which gave them the 3-0 winning lead.

"In 1984 I saw the Davis Cup final on television when we beat the States, and it was a great incentive," he said.

A disappointed Russian captain Vadim Borisov said there was a fine line between

success and failure during all of the games.

"All three matches were decided by just one or two points," he said.

Borisov's top player Yevgeny Kafelnikov, whose final volley landed out to give Bjorkman and Appel their win, showed his dejection by sitting throughout the post-match press conference with his head in his hands.

The 20-year-old, whose has risen from outside the top 100 to eleventh in the rankings after a hugely successful season, rarely looked up to answer, but he said through an interpreter: "We lacked luck and experience, but I hope we will have another chance at a Davis Cup final."

Kafelnikov agreed that the defeat had been due to "inexperience in dealing with pressure at this level of Davis Cup competition."

"It was very difficult to play in a crowded stadium where everyone was willing us to win. The pressure the crowd placed on us was some 150 times greater than that they placed on the Swedish team."

Holland leads in Chess Olympiad

MOSCOW (AP) — Holland took the lead Saturday in the 31st Chess Olympiad, defeating France 4-0 to move up to a score of 11/12 on the third day of the competition.

Jan Timman, a former candidate for the World Chess Championship, defeated the top French player Joel Lautier on the top board.

Pre-tournament favourites Russia, again omitting world champion Garry Kasparov, still managed a 3-1 victory over Turkmenistan. The victory takes Russia to equal third place with 9.5 out of 12.

The leader going into morning play, Lithuania, was defeated by Yugoslavia 2.5-1.5 and dropped back to equal third place.

The U.S. team was paired against Finland, but after six hours play was only 2-1 up with one game to finish.

Jansher wins 61st title

DOHA (R) — World champion Jansher Khan won his 61st title on the world tour by beating Rodney Eyles 15-5 15-7 15-2 in the final of the Qatar International Saturday.

There were several eyeball-to-eyeball confrontations between the two, with Jansher insisting he should get penalty strokes for the Australian's blocking in mid-court and Eyles insisting that the world champion was picking up double bounces.

The world champion claimed his performance was the best of his career — perhaps because he had overwhelmed the official world number four almost to the point of humiliation.

Jordan Cup semifinals kick off today

By Aileen Bannayan
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The top four qualifying teams in the Jordan Cup begin their quest for the title Monday when the first leg of the semifinal round kicks off with Al Faisali facing Al Hussein in Amman, and Al Ramtha meeting Al Arabi in Irbid.

The winners of the two-leg semifinal will play in the final for the Kingdom's second most important soccer title after the First Division crown.

The knockout competition had begun on Nov. 13 with 28 first and second division teams divided into two groups. All first division teams except for lowly Al Karmel survived the first and second rounds.

In the quarterfinals, Al Hussein beat Al Jazireh 2-0 while Al Faisali eliminated Al Wihdat 3-2 in group 1. Al Arabi knocked out Kufroum 1-0 and Al Ramtha beat Al Ahli 1-0 in Group 2.

Only five teams have won the title since the competition was initiated in 1980: Al Faisali have clinched the title seven times, Al Wihdat three times, Al Ramtha twice, and Al Jazireh and Arabi once each.

Tideholders Al Faisali are aiming to win their record eighth Jordan Cup title.

Although the team has had its ups and downs this season, Al Faisali finished the first leg of the First Division in third place, and hope to advance that standing when the competition resumes on Dec. 8.

Unlike other seasons, the Kingdom's most successful soccer team has only won the 1994 Cup Winner's Cup.

In 1993, Al Faisali clinched the first division, the Jordan Cup and the Cup Winner's Cup, and in 1992 they won the Jordan Cup, the Shield and the First Division.

Al Hussein, who are in second place in the First Division and are the top scoring team so far, are eager to add the '94 Jordan Cup to the Federation Shield title which they won by defeating Al Faisali to clinch their first major title.

The team's only other best achievement was finishing second in the First Division in 1990 and 1992.

Al Ramtha who are fourth in the First Division have a good chance of reaching the final and have maintained a relatively consistent form this season. They won the Jordan Cup

in 1990 and 1991 and last won the Federation Shield in 1993.

Al Arabi hope to repeat their 1986 Jordan Cup success when they overcame Al Jazireh 1-0 to win their first major title. On their way to the final, Al Arabi had then eliminated Al Faisali, Al Ramtha and Al Hussein. Al Arabi had also reached the semifinal in the 1990 season but were knocked out by Al Hussein.

The biggest upset of this year's Jordan Cup was the elimination of current First Division leaders Al Wihdat whose last major title was the Cup Winner's Cup in 1992.

Kufroum, a newcomer to the first division, had also hoped to make a good impression after some surprising results in the First Division. However, they were knocked out by Al Arabi, so were Al Ahli who had an easy way to the semifinal but later lost to Al Ramtha.

JORDAN CUP RECORD

1980	..... Faisali
1981	..... Faisali
1982	..... Wihdat
1983	..... Faisali
1984	..... Jazireh
1985	..... Wihdat
1986	..... Arabi
1987	..... Faisali
1988	..... Wihdat
1989	..... Faisali
1990	..... Ramtha
1991	..... Ramtha
1992	..... Faisali
1993	..... Faisali

Hawks end Orlando's winning streak

ATLANTA (R) — Jon Koncack made a jumper, a free throw and a key defensive play down the stretch as the Atlanta Hawks ended the Orlando Magic's club-record nine-game winning streak Saturday.

Stacey Augmon scored 21 points for the Hawks, who erased a seven-point deficit in the final four minutes to win 107-105.

"We need to play like this every night," said Augmon whose last jumper tied the score at 105-105.

O'Neal had 27 points and 15 rebounds and Anfernee Hardaway added 26 points for the Magic, who were held

scoreless in the final 1:44.

In Los Angeles, the winless Clippers fell to 0-15, equalling the second-worst start in NBA history with a 103-95 loss to the Minnesota Timberwolves.

The Clippers are just two losses shy of the all-time record for most losses at the start of a season, set by the expansion Miami Heat in 1988.

At Detroit, rookie Grant Hill scored four of his 19 points during an 11-0 third-quarter run that broke open the game as the Pistons handed the Phoenix Suns a 107-97 defeat.

Charles Barkley led the

Suns with 20 points and 13 rebounds.

In New York, Charles Smith scored 23 points and Anthony Mason added a season-high 22 as the Knicks rebounded from their worst loss of the season with a 111-95 victory over the Washington Bullets.

The Knicks, who have 11 straight wins over Washington, were coming off a 125-100 rout at the hands of Orlando.

In Chicago, Scottie Pippen scored 26 points to lead the Bulls to a 125-109 victory over the Boston Celtics.

Pippen, who hit 11-of-15 shots from the field, scored 16 points in the first half.

Tomba makes impressive start

TIGNES, France (Agencies) — Alberto Tomba started his 1994-95 campaign in impressive fashion by winning the first slalom of the man's Alpine Skiing World Cup Sunday.

Prevented from opening the season in front of Italian fans in Sestriere because of the lack of snow across the border, the Tomba burst back with two perfect runs to win in a combined time of 1:41.84 in the French resort of Tignes.

His victory, which left second-placed Austrian Michael Tritscher more than a second behind on 1:42.86, crowned a perfect weekend for the three-time Olympic champion.

Sweden's Thomas Fogdö was third in 1:43.03. If Tomba started the new season the way he finished the previous one — he won the final two slaloms of last season to bring his World Cup tally to 33 wins — his main rivals for the overall title, Kjetil Andre Aamodt of Norway and Luxembourg's Marc Girardelli were less impressive.

Third in Saturday's giant, the Norwegian World Cup holder was an average seventh in Sunday's slalom. Girardelli, a five-time World Cup winner, failed to qualify for the second leg of Saturday's giant. He just made it into the top 30 in the slalom Sunday.

Eder ends 12-year drought

In Vail, Colorado, Austrian Sylvia Eder won the opening super-giant slalom of the season Saturday, ending a victory drought on the women's Alpine World Cup circuit that had lasted more than 12 years.

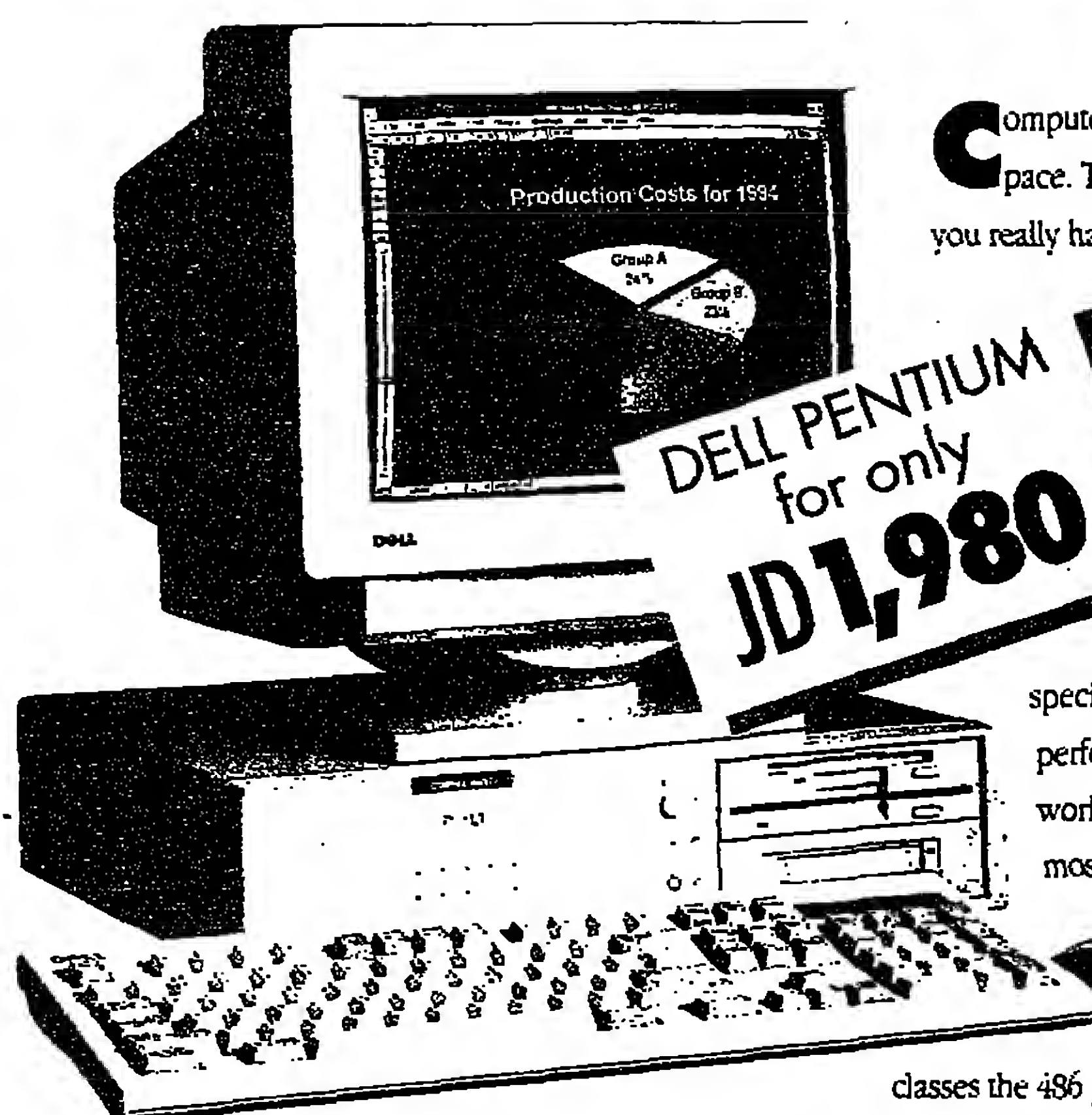
Eder's time of 1min 21.26secs was enough to hold off compatriot Veronika Stallmaier, who claimed second in 1:21.28.

Switzerland's Heidi Zeller-Bachler was third in 1:21.59 and moved into first place in the overall standings with 189 points.

Eder, 29, still holds the record as the youngest skier ever to win a women's World Cup race — a downhill in Badgastein, Austria, in 1982 when she was just 16.

"I never gave up hope that I could win again," she said. "It's doubly nice to win in Vail because it's my favourite place to ski."

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SCRIPTED IN HOLLYWOOD

East-West vulnerable, East deals. NORTH ♠ K 8 ♣ Q 7 8 9 ♦ A K 3 7 8 ♣ A 9 6 5 4 ♠ Q 7 3 2 ♣ A J 10 4 ♦ A 8 5 ♠ A 8 5 SOUTH ♠ J 10 ♣ Q 9 2 ♦ Q 10 5 4 3 2 ♠ Q 10 9

The bidding: East 2NT, South Pass, West 3NT, North Pass. Opening lead: Five of ♠. Four of the contestant's top stars, Paul Soloway of Mill Creek, Wash., Bobby Goldstein and Mike Lair, both of Dallas and Mark Lair, Canyon, Texas, squeaked out a win in the Open Board-a-Match Team Championships in Seattle. They won by half-a-board over a team led by Jim Hall, Minneapolis. An in-

spired lead on this hand provided more than the winning margin. South's weak two-bid was substantiated by most criteria. North searched for some with an all-round force of two no trump, then subsided in three diamonds when South's rebid showed a minimum. Remember the adage: "Never lead away from an ace?" The North would have amended that to: "Never underride an ace unless it is right!" That certainly was the case here. Fassell, West, found the perfect time to lead away from the ace — dummy held the king and declarer the jack. Not surprisingly, declarer played low from the table and East's hearts, East reverted to spades. West took the ace, cashed the king of hearts and then exited with the heart, leaving declarer to tackle diamonds. In an effort to regain lost ground, declarer ruffed the lead in hand and result was down two. The table the defense was more routine and, after taking a correct position in trump, declarer came home with nine tricks.

Sheringham dents Newcastle's hopes

LONDON (AFP) — Teddy Sheringham hit a hat-trick as Tottenham dented Newcastle's Premiership title hopes with a 4-2 victory at White Hart Lane here Saturday to give new manager Gerry Francis his first victory since taking over from Ossie Ardiles three weeks ago.

The England striker also made the fourth for Roman Gheorghe Popescu after Ruel Fox had twice equalised in the first-half for the third-placed Geordies.

But Newcastle manager Kevin Keegan warned critics not to write off his injury-hit team's Premiership title chances after a run of five matches without a win, saying:

"Don't suggest to me that our chance of the title is going to disappear. I think quite the opposite. And you certainly don't want another Manchester United-Blackburn two-horse race. The championship needs a Newcastle in there."

Leaders Blackburn and second-placed Manchester United both won to pile on the misery for Newcastle.

Mark Atkins, Jason Wilcox and Alan Shearer, with his 17th goal of the season, netted for Blackburn, who bounced back from their midweek League Cup defeat by Liverpool with a 3-0 win over Wimbledon at Selhurst Park.

Eric Cantona's eighth strike of the season brought Manchester United a 1-0 victory over Norwich at Old Trafford, where Alex Ferguson's men have now won 11 of their last 12 games without conceding a goal.

But victory came at a cost as United manager Alex Ferguson revealed that Andrei Kanchelskis has been added to the list of players in danger of missing Wednesday's European Champions' League clash against Galatasaray.

Fourth-placed Liverpool were held at a 1-1 draw at

Coventry, for whom Sean Flynn claimed a 57th-minute equaliser after Ian Rush, a hat-trick scorer in the midweek clash with Blackburn, had put the Reds ahead after only minutes.

Nottingham Forest remain fifth despite being held to a 2-2 draw as Arsenal — without seven internationals —

equalised three minutes before the break before Edgar Schmit earned Karlsruhe the lead. Manfred Bender ensured a convincing win with his 86th minute effort.

Borussia Moenchengladbach also took advantage of Bremen's loss to draw level on 23 points with them. Moenchengladbach won 4-2

EUROPEAN SOCCER

proved their spirit remains intact, despite the Paul Merson drugs scandal and allegations of transfer skulduggery.

Chris Bart-Williams brought Sheffield Wednesday a 1-0 win over Crystal Palace at Hillsborough, where former England star Chris Waddle appeared as a second-half substitute after nine months out through injury.

Paul Furlong, back after seven matches out with hamstring trouble, scored a last-gasp winner as Chelsea won 1-0 at Southampton. Garry Flitcroft and Uwe Rosler earned Manchester City a 2-1 win at bottom club Ipswich, whose scorer was Paul Mason.

Dortmund cruise to three-point lead

In Bonn, Borussia Dortmund's Karlheinz Riedle took advantage of Werder Bremen's slip to forge a three-point gap at the top of the German Bundesliga.

The former Lazio striker scored on the stroke of half-time against bottom club MSV Duisburg for a 1-0 home win on Friday.

Bremen had the chance to restore the status quo with an away win at Karlsruhe Saturday and Andreas Herzog kept them on course with a 24th minute opener.

But Thomas Haessler

at Stuttgart on Saturday with goals from Heiko Herrlich, Jorg Neum, Martin Dahlin and Holger Fach.

Kaiserslautern are a point behind Moenchengladbach in fourth after their 1-1 draw with Munich 1860 Friday.

Freiburg's Uwe Speks and Argentinian Rodolfo Cardoso earned a 2-0 away win at Bayer Uerdingen for fifth spot.

Sixth-placed Bayern Munich beat Dynamo Dresden 2-1 Saturday without skipper Lothar Mathias who was suspended for one match and fined 25,000 (\$16,000) Wednesday for accusing a referee of corruption after a league match.

Christian Ziege scored twice in a three minute spell after the break to give the Munich side a little cheer after an unhappy couple of weeks. Bayern lost 1-0 last month in the European Champions League to Paris Saint Germain in the Olympic Stadium leaving their qualification for the quarter-finals in doubt.

Real, Deportivo held to draws

In Madrid, Spanish first division pacesetters Real Madrid and Deportivo La Coruna had to be satisfied with a share of the points in their away Saturday league matches when they both scored 1-1 draws.

OCA strips 11 Chinese of Asian Games medals

China promises to punish Hiroshima drug-takers

KUWAIT (Agencies) — Eleven Chinese competitors in October's Asian Games, where China captured 137 gold medals, were stripped of their medals on Saturday after testing positive for drugs, the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) said.

Two of those named, swimmers Lu Bin and Xiong Guoming, each won four gold medals at the games.

An OCA statement said urine samples of the 11 competitors all showed traces of dehydrocorticosterone, DHT, a drug banned by the International Olympic Committee (IOC).

"The OCA president decided that article 73 of the OCA constitution and rules be applied to all the 11 Chinese athletes whereby all

honours and medals won by them during the XII Asian Games held in Hiroshima be withdrawn," the statement by the Kuwait-based OCA said.

In the first reaction from China, the Xinhua News Agency quoted a Chinese Olympic Committee statement as saying a special panel had been formed to launch an investigation and impose "severe punishment."

"The associations concerned are going to make a thorough investigation of the cases as quick as possible and take actions against the athletes tested positive and others concerned," COC officials were quoted as saying by the Xinhua news agency.

The committee published a list of the disgraced athletes, who included six men and five women. Seven won gold medals at the games, another three won silver medals and one won a bronze.

Xinhua also for the first time named the 11 athletes as swimmers Hu Bin, Xiong Guoming, Fu Yong, Zhang Bin, Lu Bin, Zhou Guanbin and Yang Aihua, hurdler Han Qing, canoeists Zhang Lei and Qiu Suoren, and cyclist Wang Yan.

China's world 400 metres freestyle champion Yang Aihua, one of the 11, had already been banned last month after testing positive for excessive levels of testosterone.

Chinese officials said then

Yang's action was an individual deed and denied charges that it conducted systematic drug taking.

The statement said OCA president Sheikh Ahmad Al-Fahd Al Sabah asked the council's medical committee to study the case further. It did not elaborate.

"The OCA will continue to strive for drug-free sports and will do all in its power to join hands with all sports organisations to achieve this aim," the statement said.

The IOC issued a statement welcoming the attitude of Chinese sports authorities during the affair.

"They have collaborated fully with the international bodies at all stages of the procedure, they have clearly

informed the IOC of their intention to seek out and sanction the true culprits."

Xinhua said the COC "has long opposed the use of banned substance in competitive sports and supported the provisions of the International Olympic Committee and international sports organisations."

The COC statement said: "It is clear to all that the excellent performances of most Chinese athletes were achieved through long-term, hard and scientific training. Although the positive results are the acts of individuals, COC took the matter seriously and has requested every individual sport association to strengthen the rules against the use of drugs."

Sweden dominates sprint swimming

STAVANGER, Norway (R) — Sweden claimed a world-best relay mark set by another Swedish quartet — Lindstroem, Goran Titus, Holmqvist and Peter Pariklo — in Espoo, Finland, in November 1992 at the European Sprint Championships.

Fourteen-year-old Emma Igelstroem in the women's 50 metres breaststroke and teammate Jonas Akeson put Sweden on the golden trail before the men's 4x50 freestyle relay team closed the day with their world mark.

Sandra Voelker retained her 50 metres freestyle title and Jirka Letzin won the men's 50 backstroke to claim individual golds for Germany before Voelker led off the victorious German women's 4x50 metres medley relay squad.

Zsolt Hegmegi, Lars-Ove Jansson, Joakim Holmqvist and Paer Lindstroem clocked one minute 27.62 seconds to

shave 0.32 seconds from the world-best mark set by another Swedish quartet — Lindstroem, Goran Titus, Holmqvist and Peter Pariklo — in Espoo, Finland, in November 1992 at the European Sprint Championships.

Holmqvist inspired the victory, overhauling Germany's Torsten Spanneberg on the third leg of the race with a mighty turn of pace.

Denislav Kalchev of Bulgaria prevented a title sweep by the Swedes and Germans with victory in the opening men's 100 metres individual medley in which defending champion Ron Dekker of the Netherlands was disqualified.

The two-day meeting has attracted only about 110 swimmers from 20 nations. Most major competitors, such as world champions Ale-

xander Popov and Franziska Van Almsick, have stayed away.

Recent disclosures that seven swimmers were among 11 Chinese competitors reported to have returned positive dope tests at the Asian Games have inevitably cast a shadow over the swimming world.

This has not affected entry numbers here, but only two individual medallists from September's World Championships in Rome are here and one of them — 50 metres freestyle silver medallist Natalia Mesheryakova — failed to make the semifinals in her event Saturday.

By contrast, Voelker, who always performs well at the sprint championships, rose to the occasion again in the 50 freestyle.

Blair leads World Cup sprint

OBIIHRO, Japan (AFP) — American speed skater Bonnie Blair made a dream start to her final season, winning three of the four World Cup races which ended here Sunday.

Blair, the winner of five Olympic gold medals, coasted to easy victories in both 500m races and one of the 1,000m events. She had been denied a clean sweep by finishing third in the other 1,000m on Saturday.

"This will be my last season," Blair repeated as numerous reporters asked the same question.

"I'll be finished, I'll be sad to walk away from the competition, but I'll definitely always stay involved in the sport that has brought happiness to my life," she said.

As her closest rival, Ye Qiaobo of China, retired af-

ter the Lillehammer Olympics, Blair never faced a serious challenge in her favourite 500m event, which she dominated in the previous three Winter Games.

The American, world record holder with 39.10sec at the distance, clocked 41.03 on Sunday, enough to beat Japan's Kyoko Shimazaki by 0.10sec and Oksana Ravilova of Russia by 0.24sec.

She went on to win the 1,000m race in 1:22.78, well clear of Ravilova in 1:23.70 and Monique Garbrecht of Germany in 1:23.81.

Blair leads the overall standings with perfect 80 points in the 500m and 70 points in the 1,000m, followed by Lillehammer Olympic bronze medallist Franziska Schenk of Germany with 60 in both tables.

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Lebanese politicians trade charges in widening scandal

BEIRUT (Agencies) — Lebanese politicians are hurling accusations of corruption at each other in a blazing row over billionaire Prime Minister Rafik Al Hariri's decision to resign.

The bitter exchanges add new dimensions daily to a widening corruption scandal that threatens to engulf Lebanon's top politicians and former civil war chieftains.

After two years of thinly veiled allegations that his projects for rebuilding Lebanon are steeped in bribery and motivated by profiteering, Mr. Hariri lost patience last week and bluntly called his opponents hypocrites.

Announcing his resignation, he said those obstructing his efforts posed as crusaders against corruption "but it is not enough to speak out against corruption to become clean and honest."

"People can point out with their 10 fingers those who squandered public money and plundered private money, those who got rich from the pockets of the people, people's sweat and people's dignity," Mr. Hariri said.

Few Lebanese doubted he meant ex-militia leaders like Nabih Berri, his main political rival, who is speaker of parliament, most other ex-warlords also hold high office.

"None of them is above suspicion. All of them are under suspicion and all are on the list of the public's accusations," Mr. Hariri said.

That was an oblique but telling reference to the trial of former Christian warlord Samir Geagea on post-war bombing and murder charges. Mr. Geagea is the first militia chief to be tried and there are suggestions that the others should be tried, too.

Even wartime civilian leaders came under the spotlight as the Hariri row spread.

Leaping to Mr. Hariri's aid, President Elias Hrawi attacked his critics and said two prominent opponents of himself and the prime minister ought to be in jail for tax dodging.

Former Prime Minister Omar Karami and former Speaker Hussein Husseini — whose offices made them the highest Sunni Muslim and Shiite officers of the state — falsified property deals to avoid taxes, Mr. Hrawi said.

"If this happened in any other country in the world, whether backward or advanced, he who did it would go to jail," he added in a newspaper interview.

"But nonetheless Monsieur Karami lectures about being honest and straight. He even complains about restoration of the presidential

palace gardens."

When the two men threatened action, Mr. Hrawi told them to go right ahead.

Mr. Hrawi was himself touched by scandal on Nov. 24 when Parliamentary Deputy Yahya Shamas linked his son Roy, unnamed deputies, an unnamed minister, a businessman and 10 airline pilots to drug dealing.

The prosecutor-general has begun investigations.

Press reports said Mr. Hrawi offered to step down to defend his son, but he denied them and said:

"I am the one who want to reveal everything in front of the judiciary. I am not afraid of anything and if my son Roy is connected to any breach of the law, may 700 shoes fall on his head."

Scandal also came close to Mr. Hariri on Nov. 30 when another deputy said lawmakers and politicians were bribed in 1991 to pass a law founding the Solidere company rebuilding central Beirut.

Christian Deputy Najah Wakim said some politicians received shares worth \$1 million to help push through the law.

Solidere is Mr. Hariri's brainchild and flagship of his national reconstruction programme.

Mr. Hariri has not submitted to President Hrawi a let-

ter of resignation, which aides said he planned to do this week.

Mr. Hrawi has said he will reject Mr. Hariri's resignation and the prime minister hinted Friday he might be willing to accept to form a new government if quarrelsome ministers were left out.

That left room for a settlement under the auspices of the Syrians despite the unprecedented name-calling and accusations flying all over the Lebanese political arena.

Mr. Hariri, who took office in October 1992, has been frustrated by opposition that has slowed down his economic and reconstruction policies.

His departure would be a severe setback to efforts to rebuild Lebanon from the destruction of the civil war.

His appointment had brought stability to the country's collapsing currency. His decision to quit quickly reflected on the money market Friday, requiring massive central bank intervention to stabilize the national currency, the pound.

The crisis in Lebanon, which is recovering from the devastation of disruption of the 1975-90 civil war, erupted Nov. 24 when Mr. Shamas fired accusations of corruption and drug trafficking against other politicians.



MILITARY TALK: Prime Minister and Minister of Defence Abdul Salam Majali Sunday meets with Chief of Staff of the Spanish Defence Force Lieutenant-General Jose Rodriguez, who is currently visiting the Kingdom. Dr. Majali and the Lt. Gen. Rodriguez discussed Jordanian-Spanish cooperation in military fields and the situation in the Middle East. They also discussed the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty and the need to meet the development needs of the region, stressing the importance of Europe's role in this regard. Lt.-Gen. Rodriguez was also received by His Royal Highness Prince Abdullah, commander of the Special Forces, and was briefed on duties assigned to the Special Forces. The Spanish military official watched drills with live ammunition as well as martial arts and free jump exercises (Petra photo)

Algeria boosts protection of journalists after new killing

ALGIERS (Agencies) — Algeria stepped up the protection of journalists Sunday after the publishing director of the independent daily Le Matin was shot and killed.

Said Mekbel, 36, died at 9:00 a.m. (0800 GMT) Sunday without regaining consciousness after slipping into a coma following Saturday's attack, said government officials. Reports by colleagues earlier said he had died late Saturday.

Mekbel was shot twice in the head by two assailants aged around 25 as he dined near his paper's headquarters at Hussein Dey, an eastern Algiers suburb, according to a journalist who was with him.

The killers then rushed outside and sped off in a waiting car, media reports said.

Mekbel was the 24th journalist to be killed in Algeria since May last year, amid a violent conflict between Islamic militants and the

military-backed government. A well-known columnist, he had already escaped two previous attempts on his life. His last column, published Saturday, was devoted to the dangers of the journalist's work.

Mekbel's killing was the third murder of a journalist in the past four days. On Wednesday, a television reporter and a press journalist from the El Massa daily were dragged from their homes before being decapitated.

Fundamentalist groups accuse journalists of being on the side of the government.

Government spokesman Ahmad Attar said the protection of journalists was a "high priority for the government" and added senior government officials were in "permanent contact" with media figures on how to protect them from the wave of violence sweeping the country.

The Algerian newspaper editors' association said the killings of journalists would

not deter it from continuing the fight for freedom and democracy, while the association of Algerian journalists called on the authorities to ensure extra protection for its members.

The international group Reporters Sans Frontieres (Reporters Without Borders — RSF), said Mr. Mekbel was the 27th journalist killed in the country since June 1993.

Two journalists were killed on Wednesday night in Boufarik in southern Algeria.

Muslim militants have targeted journalists as part of a campaign to overthrow the army-backed government following the cancellation in January 1992 of a general election which Islamic fundamentalists were set to win.

RSF said it had shipped flak jackets and bomb detectors to Algerian journalists and demanded that authorities tighten their protection, but the killing proved its efforts were vain.

Majlis supports Khamenei as top leader

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iranian ruler Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has tightened his grip on power winning overwhelming backing to be the top religious authority for Shiite Muslims, with parliament on Sunday joining the chorus of support.

Parliament issued a letter backing "the shining sun Ayatollah Al Ozm" (Grand Ayatollah) Khamenei as the right person to occupy the post of Marja-e-Taghid, or the source of religious emulation for Shiites.

Ayatollah Khamenei is the "most informed person on the question of Islam and the Muslim world, and the most qualified man to guide the Muslim community," said the letter read in the parliament.

Although there has been a slight resistance to Ayatollah Khamenei's designation, it seems unlikely to stop him becoming a true successor to Ayatollah Khomeini, the founder of the Islamic republic, who commanded both political and religious leadership.

Following a short but intense campaign waged by Ayatollah Khamenei's followers in the heart of the political establishment, he was chosen as a marja by two of Iran's most influential religious and political organisations.

He also won support from the school of theology in Korasan province, the second most powerful in Iran, as well as from Iran's Revolutionary Guards and the head of Iraq's Shiite opposition, Ayatollah Mohammad Bakr Hakim.

Although his designation does not reflect a general consensus among the country's powerful clergy, it paves the way for the leader to become the Islamic republic's religious and political strongman at the relatively young age of 55.

Afghan factions agree Dec. 15 truce — OIC

JEDDAH (AFP) — Rival Afghan factions holding indirect peace talks in Iran have agreed in principle to a ceasefire starting on Dec. 15, the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) said Sunday.

The Jeddah-based OIC is sponsoring talks in the Iranian capital aimed at reaching a political settlement to the civil war in Afghanistan, which has claimed 7,000 lives this year.

"If the ceasefire is respected, it should help reach a lasting settlement and the formation of a transitional government acceptable to all sides," OIC Secretary General Hamid Algabid told a press conference.

The OIC representative at the Tehran talks, Ibrahim Saleh-Bakr, proposed a three-point peace plan to the warring factions, which calls for an unconditional U.N.-

monitored ceasefire for two to three months.

The plan also envisages the election of a head of government for six months to a year, and free legislative elections to a parliament which would then choose a president.

Afghan representatives were discussing a date for the next round of peace negotiations, Mr. Algabid said. The current round of talks, also attended by Pakistani and U.N. delegates, opened last Tuesday.

The fighting in Afghanistan is on the agenda for the Dec. 13-14 OIC summit meeting in the Moroccan city of Casablanca, Mr. Algabid said.

He said the summit would also discuss the "drastic situation" in Bosnia-Herzegovina, adding that he regretted the "resignation of the international community in the face of what is happening in Bosnia."

Achille Lauro survivors arrive in Kenyan port

MOMBASA (R) — A group of 106 cheering survivors from the Achille Lauro disaster arrived at the port of Mombasa on Sunday at the end of an ordeal that began when the liner burst into flames off the Horn of Africa last week.

The cargo ship MSC Lucy brought to Mombasa crew members from Central and South America, the Philippines, Italy and a handful of other countries, shipping officials said.

Four other ships carrying some 500 passengers and crew were expected in Mombasa on Sunday night and would be offloaded on Monday, they added.

Other survivors have arrived in the Red Sea port of Djibouti.

The crew members, including four musicians, were handed clothes and supplies of everything from shaving foam to moisturisers.

They were then ushered into cars and driven to a

Mombasa hotel set on palm tree-lined white beaches.

One of the musicians, Marilyn Maraw, told Reuters she was sleeping in her cabin when she heard a loud bang on her door. She at first ignored the noise but opened the door when it got louder.

"I saw people running down the passage way in life jackets," she said.

The crew appeared to be well rested and most of them said they were happy to be on land finally.

Kenya's Tourism Minister Noah Katana Ngala was on hand to meet the rescue ship.

Also on Sunday, it was announced that an elderly Dutchwoman who survived the Achille Lauro sinking had died after falling ill on a rescue vessel.

A Dutchman is still missing after the disaster, Italian coast guard officials said.

Coast Guard Captain Ferdinando Lolli named the dead woman as Evertina Spiekermann, 73.

U.S. assures sceptical Egypt of friendship

CAIRO (R) — The top U.S. general assured the Egyptian government of Washington's friendship on Sunday, implicitly dismissing reports of serious disagreements over nuclear disarmament and policy towards Libya.

"It's extraordinarily important for our government to have such strong friends as Egypt. Without it our hands would be much more tied," General John Shalikashvili, chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, told reporters.

"We in the United States value very highly the good relationship we have and we want to make sure we do all that we can to maintain and to strengthen that relationship," he added, speaking after two hours of talks with President Hosni Mubarak.

Government newspapers have made much of U.S. press articles seen as critical of Egyptian policy and the two governments are known to differ on how to set about banning weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East.

One of Mr. Mubarak's political advisers, Osama Al Baz, said on Sunday that Egypt and the United States

were bound to differ from time to time but he made light of the articles in the Washington Post and U.S. News and World Report.

"Egypt can never be a satellite of the United States...it's natural that Egyptian policy should not be identical with U.S. policy because that would mean Egypt had become a U.S. state or the United States a Middle East state," he told reporters.

The United States provides \$2 billion a year in aid and military equipment to Egypt, making it one of the biggest recipients of Washington's largesse in the world.

Apart from Gen. Shalikashvili, two other important U.S. officials — arms control negotiator Thomas Graham and Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) Director James Woolsey — arrived in Cairo last week with minimal publicity.

Airport sources said Mr. Woolsey arrived on Friday but U.S. embassy officials were not available to confirm this.

Mr. Graham, deputy director of the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, is campaigning for an indefinite extension of the nuclear Non-

Proliferation Treaty when it comes up for review at a conference in Geneva next April.

Israel has not signed the treaty and Egypt says it will not take a position on extending it until it has answers to some of its concerns on regional security.

Gen. Shalikashvili said he and Mr. Mubarak did not discuss any specific agreements on Sunday.

"Among friends, it's very useful to take the time to come and say thank you — that's what I'm here to do, to ensure that we're on the right track and that we see things the same way and so far I certainly am gratified to see that we do," he added.

The general was not asked about the press articles, which said Washington looked askance at high-level corruption at Cairo and at the close relationship between Egypt and Libya.

Dr. Baz said some "bureaucratic circles other than decision-makers" might be behind the press articles.

"If these circles imagined they were putting pressure on Egypt, then far from it, Egypt does not act under

pressure and nothing frightens it," he added.

On Sunday the international newspaper Al Hayat quoted Robert Pelletreau, assistant U.S. secretary of state for the Middle East, as saying the articles were not officially inspired.

"It's completely untrue. We consider our relations with Egypt to be excellent. We very much appreciate our cooperation in the peace process and other wider matters," he added.

But Mr. Pelletreau appeared to evade questions on whether there was a disagreement over Egypt campaigning to make other Arab states withhold judgment on extending the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

"It is natural that that should be part of our dialogue with Egypt," it quoted him as saying.

He also evaded a question on what the United States was doing to persuade Israel to sign the treaty and open up its nuclear installations to U.N. inspection.

"We want comprehensive international commitment to the treaty...we have urged many states to sign it," he said.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Israeli troops shoot at British diplomat

TEL AVIV (AFP) — A British diplomat had a narrow escape on the Gaza Strip when Israeli soldiers opened fire on his car, military officials said Sunday. The shooting occurred Saturday night after Deputy Cultural Attaché Peter Morrison failed to stop at the Nahal Oz crossing between the Strip and Israel. A bullet smashed the rear window of the vehicle but Mr. Morrison, of the British Council in East Jerusalem, was unhurt. He apparently did not hear a shouted order to halt on a rainy night, the officials said. Troops fired in the air and then at the car which had diplomatic plates. Israeli soldiers shot a suspected Palestinian suicide bomber at the Erez crossing from Gaza on Sunday morning.

Kurdish paper hits stands despite bombings

ANKARA (R) — Turkey's leading pro-Kurdish daily appeared on news stands on Sunday, the day after large bombs badly damaged three of its offices, killing one person. The Turkish-language Ozgur Ulke, however, appeared slimmer than its normal six-page edition. It published photographs of wounded members of staff and the blackened shell of its Istanbul headquarters. One person was killed and at least 22 others wounded when simultaneous bomb blasts ripped through two Ozgur Ulke offices in Istanbul and its Ankara bureau in the early hours of Saturday. The paper's printing centre was not damaged. In its Sunday edition, Ozgur Ulke blamed the government for the blasts, saying it was trying to silence the paper because of its extensive coverage of the Kurdish guerrilla insurgency in southeast Turkey.

Kinkel slams Israeli 'contempt' for EU

BONN (AFP) — German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel, the acting president of the European Union (EU) Council of Ministers, has blasted the Israelis for what he calls their "contempt" for the EU, the weekly magazine Der Spiegel says in its Monday issue. According to the magazine, Mr. Kinkel was furious at being denied an opportunity to speak at the ceremony for the signing on Oct. 26 of a formal peace between Israel and Jordan. He was all the more irked because Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev was allowed to give a speech. Mr. Kinkel met Israeli Ambassador Avraham Primor on Friday and according to Der Spiegel told him: "Unless you learn to work with us (we are heading) for a crisis. Things cannot go on like this." He reportedly said the EU had contributed "more than anyone else" to financing the Middle East peace process and in return received only "contempt and lack of consideration"

from Israel. Mr. Kinkel was quoted as saying that compared to the EU, Russia's contribution in the Middle East was negligible. "And even the few rubles they have got, we supplied to them," he reportedly said.

Three shot dead in southern Egypt

CAIRO (AP) — Three suspected extremists were shot dead in a gun battle with police in southern Egypt, police officials said Sunday. And in a separate incident, a police officer and nine policemen were killed in an accident Sunday in Sohag 350 kilometres south of Egypt when their truck was hit by train as it crossed the rails and veered into the Nile. The shooting erupted Saturday night as police raided the hideout of the three men in sugar cane fields around Mallawi, 260 kilometres south of Cairo, said the officials. The three dead men were identified as Hassan Mohammad Abdul Salam, Sherif Mamdouh and Yehia Mohammad Kamel. Mallawi is the new stronghold of militants trying to overthrow President Hosni Mubarak's government and turn Egypt into an Islamic state. More than 460 people have been killed in the violent confrontation between the extremists and the government since 1992.

Sudan to advocate cooperation at Islamic summit

KHARTOUM (AFP) — Sudan is to urge this month's Islamic summit to stand firm against accusations that Islamic nations sponsor terrorism and abuse human rights, the Al Engaz Al Watani daily said quoting a top official. Hassan Adam, director of international organisations in the Foreign Ministry, said Sudan would make the call at the summit in Casablanca, Morocco on Dec. 13 and 14. Anti-Islamic campaigns were trying to distort the image of Islam and to "curb the cultural Islamic tide which spread in most countries of the world," Mr. Adam told the paper. The Sudanese team would recommend laying down a strategy for restoring order to "the Islamic house in the political and economic spheres to cope with the growing international and regional blocs." He said Muslim leaders had to consider "the growing harassment of Muslims in some West European countries and unfounded media campaign against the Islamic faith and the individual Muslim." Muslim leaders should also take into consideration "the unfair and biased attitudes of the big powers towards disputes in Islamic countries" such as Bosnia-Herzegovina, he said. He added that the summit should also tackle the problems of the Muslim minorities and help those minorities attain their "full rights to dignity and freedom of belief."

COLUMN

FBI: Reported crimes in U.S. drop, except murder

WASHINGTON (AFP) — U.S. crime levels dropped in 1993 — except for murder rates — a downward trend also seen in 1992, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) said. Reported violent and property crimes fell 2.1 per cent last year to 14.1 million incidents, while murders rose to 24,330, a 3.2 per cent increase, according to an FBI report due out Sunday. The murder rate was 9.5 per 100,000 population, which marks a 2.2 per cent increase over 1992, but a rate lower than 1991 and the years from 1979 to 1981 when the rate fluctuated between 9.7 and 10.2. Violent crime for the first six months of 1994 was down four per cent with murders dropping two per cent, according to FBI preliminary figures. The breakdown for violent and property crimes listed 1.9 million violent crimes, a decrease of 0.4 per cent, and 12.2 million property crimes, down 2.3 per cent. The FBI reported forcible rapes at 104,810, a decrease of 3.9 per cent; 639,760 robberies, down 1.9 per cent; 2.8 million burglaries, down 4.9 per cent; 7.8 million larcenies, down 1.2 per cent and 1.6 million car thefts, down 3.1 per cent. Aggravated assaults hit 1.1 million, up 0.7 per cent, but the rate was 440.1 per 100,000, down 0.4 per cent, a reflection of the population rising to 257.9 million from 255.1. Experts, however, warned against becoming too optimistic about the numbers. Demographic trends chart an increasing number of violent teens with access to guns. "We haven't even begun to see the problem with teenagers that we will see in the next 10 years," said Jack Levin, sociology and criminology professor at Northeastern University in Boston. "There will be a 23 per cent increase in the teenage population over the next decade, and as a result, we're going to see the murder rate rise precipitously," he added. People aged 19 and under accounted for 29.2 per cent of all known assailants last year, up from 26.6 in 1991 according to the FBI. The FBI also listed the murder rate ranking for 25 cities with more than 100,000 residents. Gary, Indiana, topped the list with 89.1 murders per 100,000 people. New Orleans, Louisiana, came in second at 80.3 and Washington took the number three slot with 78.5. Los Angeles was 25th with 30.5.

Zaire to close 38 diplomatic missions

KINSHASA (AFP) — Zaire's government is to close 38 diplomatic missions and consulates abroad, slashing the present total from 63 to 25, according to a statement published after a cabinet meeting Friday. The closures are designed to produce a saving of \$6 million Belgian francs (some \$1.8 million) a month, the statement said. Kinshasa justified the decision by saying "not a day goes by without the media commenting on the tribulations of our diplomats who have racked up almost 29 months of salary arrears, not to speak of expulsions and the humiliating trials they undergo for insolvency over rent and various other charges." The statement added that, given the importance of the nation's credibility for its dealings with other states, "the government estimates it is time to pursue a policy in keeping with its means." The government has decided to recall as soon as possible all diplomats whose chancelleries are to be closed down, although the statement does not reveal which will be closed and which maintained. The state of the country's missions has been a topic of much anguish debate in Zaire in recent months. Less than a month ago, the Zairean charge d'affaires in Poland reportedly took refuge with local tramps who eke out a living around Warsaw's main railway station as he could no longer pay his rent. He was then forced to live a hand-to-mouth existence, relying on the generosity of fellow diplomats from other countries to eat. Some hard up ambassadors have simply sold their state-owned residences to pay off debts or boost their own bank balances.